

him rests, first of all, the onus of a correct interpretation of his orders in their widest bearing; and then must he, by tact and forbearance, associated with a bold front, do his utmost to execute the duty with which he is charged.

The "Tacony" was a wooden double-ender of 934 tons, a sister ship to the much-abused "Tallapoosa," which vessel, somewhat altered afterwards, has of late years been so familiar to the casual reader of the American newspapers. The double-enders were a type of vessel, the conception of which was due to the exigencies of the civil war; of light draft in proportion to their displacement, they could carry heavy batteries and large crews in shallow water. Being designed for river work, and not for the high seas, it is not to be wondered at if these vessels were regarded with distrust when detailed for the latter service. Being side-wheelers, with the machinery high above water, their efficiency in a strictly naval fight was limited; and their manœuvring qualities, or rather the lack of them, became a by-word in the navy.

The "Tacony's" battery consisted of two sixty-pounder rifles in pivot, and four eight-inch smooth-bores in broadside, besides four small howitzers; and she had a complement of 144 officers and men.

Such was the little vessel that was destined to take a not unimportant part in the events connected with the re-occupation of a part of Mexico by the Liberal or patriot forces.

CHAPTER II.

AT daylight of the 28th of March the "Tacony" appeared off the city of Vera Cruz, and quite a fleet was sighted moored under Sacrificios Islands. This anchorage, four miles southeastward of the harbor, is usually chosen by foreign men-of-war for sanitary reasons, although in those days, when steam launches were almost unknown, except to a few especially favored vessels, the long pull (or sail) to town was a serious matter.

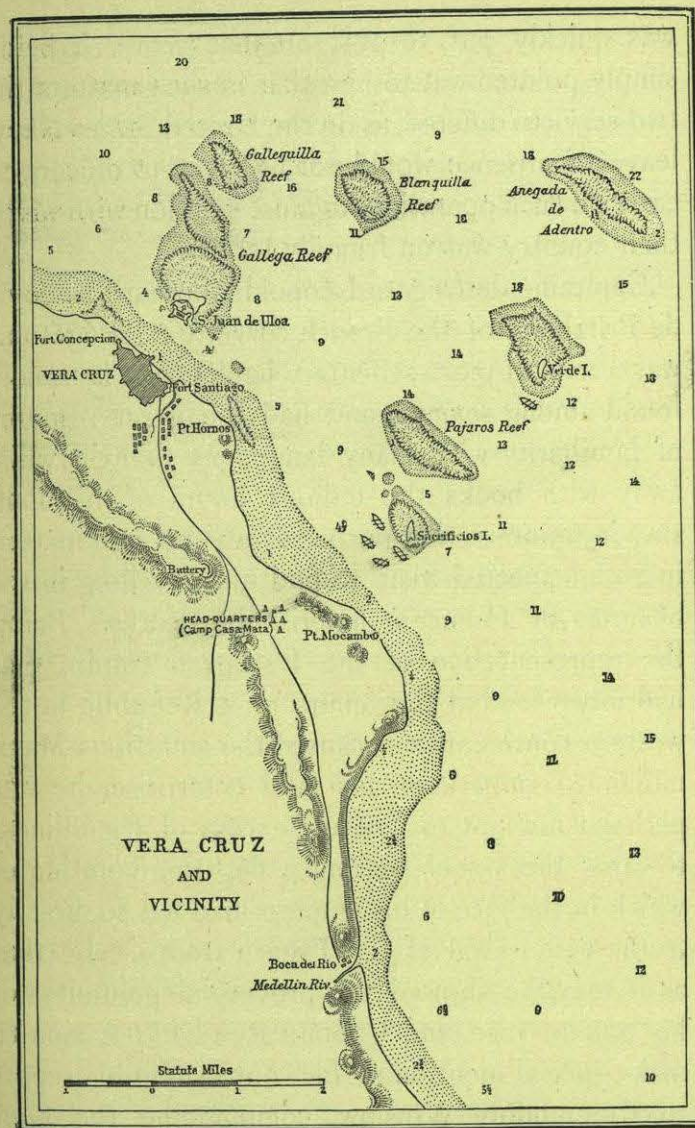
Among the vessels present was the U. S. S. "Tahoma," Lieutenant-Commander Gherardi, who, on making out the distinguishing signal of the approaching steamer, came out to meet his countryman, and thus make a tangible offer of services, pilot knowledge, advice, etc. Commander Roe quickly decided to follow the custom, at least for the present, and the "Tacony" was soon snugly moored in nine and one fourth fathoms of water, a short distance inshore of Sacrificios Island. Good ground tackle is a necessity in this roadstead, as *northers* are frequent, and there is no shelter except from the immediate islands.

The "Tahoma" had been there for some time,

and the United States consul had not failed to express his appreciation of her services and of the beneficial restraining effect of the presence of an American gun-boat on the motley crowd that made and exercised the laws for that isolated community. Being now relieved, Captain Gherardi went to sea, as soon as he had put his successor *au courant* of affairs international, national, and municipal.

The other vessels lying at Sacrificios proved to be all men-of-war, flying English, French, Spanish, and Austrian colors. The usual civilities were soon exchanged, offers of assistance being sent immediately by the commanding officers, and promptly returned in person by Captain Roe. The Austrian was a single, and consequently noticeable, exception; but as his vessel was lying the other side of the reefs, well out, separated from the others, it was taken for granted that that distance and isolation had something to do with the apparent discourtesy.

The English vessel was the "Jason," a fine sloop-of-war, commanded by Captain C. Murray Aynesley, who proved to be a pleasant companion as well as efficient officer. Like many other members of that service, he had commanded a blockade runner during our civil war, and he thought at first that that might prove something of a bar to friendly relations with the American officers. On alluding to it, however, before many days passed, his mind



was quickly put to rest on that score, it being simply pointed out to him that in such matters the two services differed, as, in the United States Navy, leave of absence would not be given to officers to carry on such operations against a nation with which their country was on friendly terms.

Capitaine de frégate Léopold Eberhard Ludovic de Pritzbuer, of the French corvette "Phlégéton," was a man of more sedentary habits than is usually found among seamen, and had the great resource of familiarity with many languages to help while away with books the tedious hours of his long stay in uninteresting ports. It was no rare matter, in an unexpected visit, to find him revelling in the beauties of Homer's imperishable works. Being the representative of the European empire that had intervened in the affairs of a Republic in the western continent, and caused the ambitious Maximilian to embark on his fatal enterprise, he was perhaps not apt to feel any excess of friendliness towards the vessel bearing a flag the flaunting of which in the face of his emperor had led so directly to the withdrawal of the French troops. Be that as it may, he showed the proverbial politeness of his gallant race, and Captain Roe had occasion to make special mention of his courtesy, in his report to Commodore Winslow, commanding the Gulf squadron.

The officer in charge of the Spanish corvette

"Uloa" was an enigma, principally so from the remarkable fact he could apparently speak no known language. Born and educated in one of the rural provinces of Spain, he had never learned to talk except in the dialect of that province, and persons visiting him, fairly conversant with the Spanish tongue, could still not communicate with him. This of itself was enough to paralyze any attempt at friendly social intercourse, although he seemed a pleasant man, well aware of his peculiar position, but evidently more amused than mortified by it.

Captain Count Gustave Knight Von Gröller of the Austrian frigate and imperial yacht "Elizabeth" had not proved very sociable toward the other commanding officers, and was said to invoke the aid of cards quite extensively in passing away the time. When Roe would remark to the English or French captain that the usual ceremony of sending a boarding officer had been omitted by him, the answer was to the effect that Gröller certainly meant nothing by it, that he had perhaps been having a run of bad luck, and, as likely as not, might poke on board in person before very long, instead of first sending an aide. And that is just what occurred. About a week after the "Tacony's" arrival, the "Elizabeth's" gig was reported coming alongside with a pennant in the bows, and a tall man, taller than Roe, glittering in the full-dress uniform of a

captain in the Austrian Navy, appeared at the top of the gangway. Standing there a moment, towering above every thing, he glanced up and down the deck of the craft so novel to him, then bowed to Captain Roe, and said: "I am the Austrian." The bow was returned with precisely the same degree of politeness, and the answer made: "I am the American." In a short time he was chatting away most pleasantly in the cabin, having perfect command of the English language.

The "Elizabeth" had been sent to Vera Cruz for the express purpose of conveying Maximilian back to Europe, it having been accepted as a matter of course that General Castelnau's mission would be successful, and that the young monarch would be induced to give up the miserable struggle when deprived of the support of French arms. Such seems indeed to have been his intention; with a few intimate friends he had reached Orizaba on his way to the port, but he was destined to go no farther, and the immediate cause was the conduct toward him of the French commander-in-chief. When Marshal Bazaine received the order from the French emperor to withdraw his army from Mexico, it is easy for one familiar with his character and reputed ambitions to conceive the anger and bitterness that filled his heart. Entering the army as a private soldier, he had worked his way up to the highest rank, and his *bâton* bore the

inscription: "*Simple soldat en 1831. Maréchal de France en 1864.*" The command of the army of the Intervention in Mexico, was one of great trust and authority. At such a distance from France, unusual power and large discretion were necessarily given to an officer commanding the armies and executing the purpose of the French emperor in the New World. As slowly, but apparently surely, he tightened his grasp on Mexico, driving to remote fastnesses the patriots who refused to sell their birth-right, the Marshal's proud and haughty nature asserted itself strongly. There was neither cause for restraint nor reason for modest bearing. The very fates seemed to conspire to make of the promoted soldier a military autocrat moving on the full flood-tide of success, and the whispered suspicions of his ambition to possibly succeed or replace in person the Prince whom it was his duty to establish and support on the Mexican throne, were perhaps not ill founded. In the minds of many the matrimonial alliance that he contracted in that country pointed likewise to such a dénouement. Hence it may be discerned that when the word came to evacuate the land he had so proudly occupied, it became a revelation to him that his career of military glory and power was swiftly drawing to an end. At first he cursed the fickleness and senselessness of the Mexican people who so stubbornly resisted the foreign arms whose aid their Notables

had invoked, making the cost of the Intervention, in money and blood, greater than France could apparently afford to bear. But afterwards Prince Maximilian, to whose service were pledged his devotion and support, became the object of his bitter reproaches. He was evidently far from divining how directly the change in the French emperor's course was due to the decided action of the President of the United States. His ignorance of the true state of affairs was betrayed in a verbal message with which he charged General Magruder, of the late Confederate service, as that gentleman was about to leave Mexico for the United States. On learning that he expected to see Mr. Johnson, the Marshal said to him: "If you do, deliver this verbal message for me:

"The moral influence wielded by the government of the United States has destroyed this Empire. Upon it therefore rests the obligation to see that some government be established and sustained here that shall secure the protection of life and property and the tranquillity of this people. This, in my opinion, can only be accomplished by furnishing physical aid. The interests of foreigners in this country cannot be left without some protection. Of non-combatants engaged in peaceful pursuits, the larger proportion of whom are French subjects, there are at least thirty thousand; there should be an armed force properly distributed in

the country, temporarily at least, to assist the government that may be established in preserving order and enforcing its decrees. Ten or fifteen thousand United States troops properly distributed in the northern states and a similar number of French troops in the southern states, co-operating with each other, could accomplish this."

General Magruder did not reach the United States as soon as he had expected, but while delayed in Havana was presented to Mr. Campbell, recently appointed Minister to the Mexican Republic, and then on his way to Vera Cruz, in the frigate "Susquehanna," accompanied by General Sherman. To him he repeated the message, and Mr. Campbell forwarded it in a despatch to Washington, where it probably provoked a smile among the statesmen who had exacted from all European powers "a policy of non-intervention, of which the United States would themselves be the guardians in future."

Day by day Marshal Bazaine's intercourse with Maximilian became more and more one of quarrel, if quarrel it could be called; his temper burst all bounds and he accused the Prince of being the cause of the degradation of the French army and the humiliation of himself and his officers before the European world. Finally, in an outburst of passion, he said to him that he was no emperor but only a puppet set up by Napoleon and the army

of France, and that as a "puppet emperor" he had caused the disgrace of his supporters. The calm, well-bred Prince replied that then and there such scenes must find an end; he had been called by the Notables to be their Emperor, and he then decided to cast his lot with theirs, to govern the country with their aid, or fall with them.

Such was the immediate cause of Prince Maximilian's desperate resolve, as described by the consuls in Vera Cruz, and other persons who seemed in a position to know the circumstances. In the interests of exactness it may be stated that other accounts differ somewhat in the details. A person in Vera Cruz, in a letter to Mr. Romero, the Minister of Juarez in Washington, by whom he was considered as trustworthy, stated that the departure of Maximilian, planned without the knowledge of General Bazaine, was frustrated by an indiscretion on the part of the commander of the Austrian vessel waiting for him at Vera Cruz. The Prince had sent a despatch (at midnight of October 30, 1866) to this officer, telling him to be ready to sail by five on the following afternoon, at which time he would be there ready to embark. At early daylight the Austrian captain went to the French commander, M. Peyron, told him in confidence of the message he had received, and took his leave with the usual courteous request for commands for Trieste. M. Peyron immediately tele-

graphed the fact to Bazaine, who forthwith cut off all telegraphic communication from the public, ordered the baggage to be stopped, and then, addressing Maximilian himself, informed him that he was aware of his plans of flight, and that he would not be allowed to depart without previously abdicating in form.

Again, Mr. Chynoweth* states that it was the Imperial Commissary in Vera Cruz who, hearing of the arrival of the baggage, informed General Bazaine, then in the city of Mexico, of so significant a fact, and that the latter telegraphed to the officer in command at Orizaba to arrest the Emperor.

It was certainly desirable from the French standpoint that the abdication should precede the evacuation, as it could then be made to appear that, Maximilian having renounced his enterprise, there was no longer need of a French army to support him on his throne, and it could return to Europe with untarnished laurels; whereas, if the forces were to withdraw first, there would be no disguising the humiliating fact that from one cause or another the whole venture had proved a diplomatic and military failure, and that Maximilian's subsequent sure abdication, ejection, or capture would be the natural result of the inability of Napoleon to fulfil his promises.

* "Fall of Maximilian," by W. Harris Chynoweth.

The Prince's baggage did reach Vera Cruz; Lieutenant H——, of the Austrian Army, who was in command at Paso del Macho, the terminus of the railway from that port, has personally assured the author, that some 200 *colis* were forwarded under his special charge, and, with the exception of one particular lot that caught fire and was destroyed, all reached their destination. Furthermore, whether or not an order was received at Vera Cruz to stop this baggage, it nevertheless found its way finally on board the "Elizabeth," where it was seen by some of the officers of the "Tacony."

Whichever of the accounts be correct, there was an open rupture between the Prince and the Marshal. The former, rejecting the advice of sterling friends to abdicate, and led away by his anger, by sympathy for his supporters, and by the false representations of the Clerical party, who promised him an army and twenty million dollars to support it, returned westward, and paved the way to his tragic end by shutting himself up in Querétaro. The latter, after a final traitorous overture rejected by General Diaz,* returned to France and to the

* In a letter from Guadalupe Hidalgo, dated May 3, 1867, to Mr. Romero, in Washington, General Diaz said: "General Bazaine, through a third party, offered to surrender to me the cities which they occupied, and also deliver Maximilian, Marquez, Miramon, etc., into my hands, provided I would accede to a proposal which he made me, and which I rejected, as I deemed it not very honorable. Another proposition was also made me, by

destiny that awaited him at Metz, accomplished by a military blunder of the same nature, or by actions very much more unpardonable in the opinion of his brother officers. Both were tried by military courts, and both sentenced to be shot; but only in the case of the well-meaning but misguided young Prince was the sentence carried out.

The French army sailed, and many miles of territory and many thousands of relentless enemies now separated Maximilian from the coast; but the "Elizabeth" remained, watching events and waiting orders. While probably sharing the indignation felt by most Austrians at the way in which the French emperor had deserted their Archduke, Captain Gröller showed no signs of being aware that direct pressure had been brought by the United States government in the matter, and although he did not hold very frequent intercourse with any of the naval officers present, his attitude toward the Americans was always friendly, and before parting company he had cause to hold their commander in high esteem.

The existing status of Mexican affairs was soon learned by our friends in the "Tacony." The last of the French army, over thirty thousand strong,

authority of Bazaine, for the purchase of six thousand muskets and four million percussion caps; and if I had desired it he would have sold me both guns and powder." This is evidently the letter referred to in *Le Nouveau Monde* of October 9, 1886, extracts from which appeared in American papers.

had sailed on the 11th of March. The Republican, or Liberal, forces had followed closely on their heels during their march to the sea, capturing town after town behind them. Mexico City still resisted, as well as Querétaro, but both were closely invested. Vera Cruz, garrisoned by a Foreign Legion of some four hundred soldiers, and about two thousand Mexicans, still held out against the besiegers, who numbered about five thousand, under the command of General Barranda. On the night after the "Tacony's" arrival, the booming of cannon and the rattle of musketry proclaimed vividly the existence of a state of war, while the fires kept burning by the Imperialists to illuminate the walls, lent additional interest to the scene. In point of fact, however, operations were being carried on in a rather desultory manner, the forces being so small on both sides. The Liberals had not yet succeeded in bringing much artillery to the front, and the Imperialists had also very little besides the heavy ordnance of the harbor batteries and the great castle of San Juan de Uloa, which guarded the approach from seaward.*

While closely invested on the land side, the city was not in any way blockaded from the sea, and commercial operations had not suffered much check. Don Domingo Bureau, the Imperial Commissary,

* The castle of San Juan stands on a reef half a mile out from the town, the harbor being formed between the two.

had supreme authority in the city, and the commander of the military forces was General Antonio Taboada. The strictest vigilance was exercised, and imprisonment and exile swiftly followed any imprudent speech. The means for inflicting the latter punishment, however, were scanty and inefficient; on one occasion, during the month of March, eight offenders were embarked in a schooner, but on reaching the open sea they captured the vessel, bound the captain, and put in to Alvarado.

The aspect of affairs was dreary in the extreme to the people on board the foreign vessels anchored at Sacrificios (Sacrafish, in fore-castle parlance), nor was the prospect very good of a change. Neither fresh meat, bread, nor water was to be had. The lack of the first was a positive hardship, *salt horse* not being over palatable; and ship's bread (hard tack), while wholesome, and pleasant to the taste of fair visitors who occasionally make a picnic visit to a man-of-war, possesses a less relish for those who eat it without change for months at a time. The most serious matter was really the lack of water, for the distillation of it on board occasioned an increased consumption of coal and a consequent shortening of the "Tacony's" possible stay on the scene. Not so bad, that, thought Jacky possibly; but to responsible officers it was a grave matter.

All were interested to a greater or less extent in the progress of affairs on shore, and as it appeared