

Captain Roe had to end that little batch of correspondence by an official request of a rather unusual character. He had been enjoying some of the luxuries of life with uninterrupted regularity since a few days after their arrival. Those contributions to bodily welfare had been sent so far as a gift, and, as he expressed it to General Benavides, it was just possible that the Navy Department might embarrass him by asking why those things had not been paid for. "And so, may I beg of you, dear General Benavides, to order your people to receive remuneration in money for the beef we receive in return."

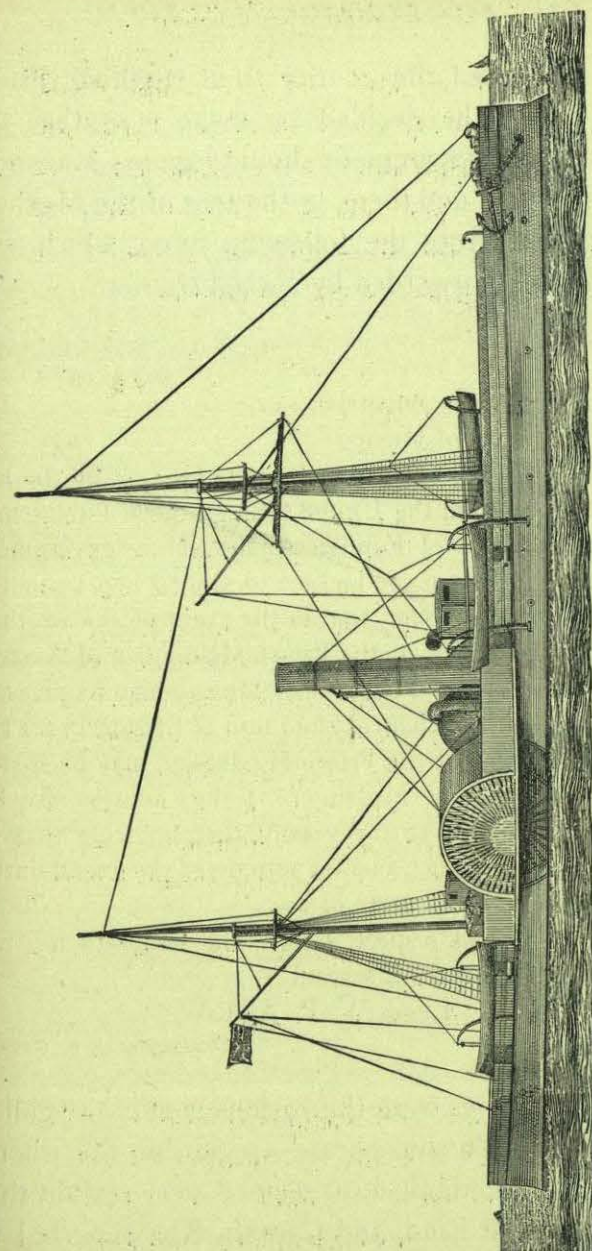
### CHAPTER III.

By the end of April affairs in Mexico appeared to be approaching a final solution, so far as news from the interior could be relied upon. The outer defences of the city of Mexico had fallen, and rumors of a definite shape, although not official, affirmed the flight of Maximilian to Texas. Of course, this was not the case. That unfortunate Prince was closely beleaguered in Querétaro, and great fears were entertained for his safety. The Austrian Minister in Washington, in obedience to instructions from his court, had already begun to communicate with Mr. Seward, asking his friendly intervention to secure, if possible, respect for the person of the Prince in the not improbable event of his falling into the hands of Juarez.

There seemed indeed cause for fears that in case of capture he might not escape with the treatment usually accorded to prisoners of war. To those on the scene this appeared a very much more dubious matter than was even apprehended by the shrewd and anxious statesmen and monarchs of the new and old worlds. In Camp Casa Mata, the head-quarters of General Benavides, there was displayed a small

white cord which was said to contain a golden thread; a similar cord was to be found in every camp of the Mexican national army; and it was held up with a half-savage ferocity that indicated a long-sworn purpose should the destroyer of their country's peace fall into their hands. Those desperate soldiers might hold small counsel with laws of war or rights of prisoners, and the power of the Juarist government to resist a popular outburst of fury could hardly be relied on to guarantee a fair trial or humane treatment.

Mr. Seward, after the interview with Count Wydenbruck, had telegraphed to Mr. Campbell, the Minister to Mexico, and at that time in New Orleans, to communicate promptly and by effectual means to President Juarez the desire of the United States government "that, in case of capture, the Prince and his supporters may receive the humane treatment accorded by civilized nations to prisoners of war." News of this having been done did not reach Vera Cruz until the 2d of May, when the usual mail steamer came in, and Captain Roe, who had occasion on the following day to visit Camp Casa Mata (for no less a purpose than to arrange terms of capitulation on the part of Señor Bureau), learned that no knowledge of such correspondence had reached the army. It was hardly to be supposed that it would be made public, but still, in the fear that some disaster or accident might



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have prevented the courier from reaching President Juarez, he decided to make sure that the views of the government should become known to him, and then and there, in the tent of the Mexican general, he wrote the following letter, which was immediately forwarded by special courier :

CAMP CASA MATA, MEXICO,  
May 3, 1867.

His Excellency President JUAREZ,  
Republic of Mexico.

SIR:—I have the honor to inform you that by the last mail received from the United States I have intelligence that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of my government has directed a courier to be sent to you to beg, upon the part of my government, that in the event of the capture, as a prisoner of war, of the Prince Maximilian of Austria, His Excellency the President of Mexico may be pleased, through a spirit of clemency and also of friendship for the United States, that the Prince Maximilian may be spared his life should it be in danger. I thus address you because it is my duty to my government, knowing that its courier may not reach you on account of the uncertainties of the condition of a state of war.

With profound respect, I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,

[Signed] F. A. ROE,

Commander U. S. Navy.

Conflicting as were the various rumors—"galley yarns," to use a ship phrase—regarding the whereabouts of Maximilian, it seemed very certain that a crisis was at hand, and Captain Roe reported to

Commodore Winslow that he hoped soon to announce the final settlement of the affairs of the Empire, and the re-establishment of the Republic, not only in Vera Cruz, but in all Mexico. As regarded Vera Cruz, there was immediate tangible reason for the hope, for he and Mr. Saulnier and the British consul had been hammering away at Señor Bureau to make him realize the situation. On the 29th of April the Imperial Governor signified to them verbally his desire to accept the mediation of England and the United States, and to meet on board the "Jason" or the "Tacony" with the Liberal general to arrange the preliminaries for a surrender of the city and fortifications. It was then agreed that the meeting should take place on board the "Tacony," and her commander was requested to exert his influence (known to be so great) as mediator with Benavides. This was gratifying and delightful in every way, and the proper overtures were made. But then Bureau hesitated, put them off, and in a moment of ill-humor refused to do what he had himself asked. His better sense soon returned, however, and he repeated the offer. So, on May 3d, Roe went on shore to Camp Casa Mata to propose the meeting again, and to ascertain what would be the general basis of terms granted. General Benavides expressed himself as willing to hold the conference at any time. The consuls then addressed them-

selves to Bureau, who replied in writing, fixing the 6th as the day for the parley, which was communicated to the Liberal general, who acquiesced and promised to hold himself in readiness. A white flag at the "Tacony's" foremast-head was to be the signal to cease firing on both sides, the hostilities to be suspended so long as that emblem of a truce should remain flying.

Unfortunately, on the day appointed one of those heavy *northers*, that are the terror of visitors to Vera Cruz, had sprung up and prevented any communication with the shore. By the 8th the wind and sea had gone down, and the English and American captains went up to town, and the two consuls selected the 9th as the most convenient day for the meeting; but on applying to the Commissary for his opinion and wishes in the matter, he peremptorily refused to hold any meeting whatever, except upon the basis of the removal of the Liberal forces three days' march from Vera Cruz, and, of course, the consequent abandonment of their batteries and investing lines. This was tantamount to another refusal to carry out his own propositions, and it only remained for Roe and Aynesley to express their disgust and retire.

In view of the fact that this was the second time that Bureau had behaved in this way, having each time himself requested the parley that would cause

a temporary cessation of operations, some sort of explanation seemed due to General Benavides, and Captain Roe addressed him a letter, giving a plain statement of facts and enclosing a copy of the Imperial Commissary's letter requesting the meeting. In making the offers of mediation, they had acted upon the supposition that the request had been made in good faith, which proved not to be the case, and the desire of the British and United States representatives to save loss and prevent bloodshed was therefore fruitless. They were therefore compelled to leave matters to their natural solution and to the course of war. "There is nothing more to expect in the way of a pacific solution to the question by way of mediation or friendly offers of service."

Benavides appreciated the situation thoroughly, and simply answered that in a few days he would have his batteries ready and heavy guns in position, and that within eight days the city would be bombarded. This is an extreme measure to take under any circumstances, and one that the General had not entertained at first. It is possible that he received orders from superior authority to mince matters no longer, or else he had come to the conclusion that the circumstances warranted a decisive course of action. The circumstances were indeed peculiar. The English Minister accredited to Prince Maximilian had stated in a despatch to his

consul that the Imperial government was practically at an end; Bureau admitted to both English and American consuls that that was the case, but said that to prevent anarchy, riot, and bloodshed he would not relinquish his position "until some one can come to relieve me of my command." There was no Imperial, Austrian, or French officer that could do this, and the one person left was the Liberal commander, who was certain to relieve him by force before very long; with him he refused to treat. Warnings were sent to him that serious operations were to commence, and a passionate appeal was made to him to let all women and children leave the city. He refused to let them go, but offered as a refuge the castle of San Juan de Uloa, where people were already dying like sheep, of fever.

The secret of all this seemed to be that the revenues of the city and custom-house were passing into his pocket, and that, having a vessel ready in the harbor to take him and his officers away, he proposed to hold on to his lucrative position until driven out. There was no nationality predominant in the city; the Imperial flag of Maximilian's government was flown, but Imperial orders for custom-house money and revenues were dishonored by the Imperial Governor, who disavowed and ignored the Imperial sovereign and his orders. As put by Commander Roe, in a despatch to Commodore

Winslow, it seemed clear "that there never was a position or a case where forcible action by all nationalities could and should more properly interfere in behalf of duty and right." But so long as Englishmen and Americans remained individually unharmed there was no reasonable excuse for interference. A single authoritative demand, coupled with offensive measures, might possibly have compelled that man, who acknowledged himself to be without a master, to surrender his command. Roe was in good accord with the English and French captains, but there was no authority for them to do what humanity daily and hourly appealed to them to do. To engage, without orders, in open hostilities with a nation (as Maximilian's Empire was acknowledged to be by most powers), was a more serious step than would be sanctioned by the broadest interpretation of instructions. Most especially were Aynesley's and Pritzbuër's hands tied, as Maximilian's was still acknowledged by their country to be the *de facto* government.

One other thing was beginning to worry the American commander; his stay in port was approaching an end, from the fact that the provisions in the ship were beginning to be used up. Fresh beef and vegetables twice a week were a great boon, but had no very material effect in putting off the evil day. The bread, it was seen, would not last beyond the end of the month, and although by

buying enough for ten days, which he could do, it would hold out with the rest of the rations, yet it had to be reported to the commander-in-chief that, if not relieved or provisioned by the first of June, the "Tacony" would have to leave her station. Commander Roe was, therefore, doubly anxious to put an early end to the chaotic state of affairs on shore; and the pleasant relations that he enjoyed with the Liberals, coupled with the respect he had won from the Imperialists, made his continued presence seem very desirable to all parties.

Although the port was not blockaded, trade was seriously interfered with by petty acts of tyranny on the part of the city authorities, and complaints were constantly being made of such acts. But grievous as it all was, it was beyond the "Tacony's" sphere of action. Captain Roe recommended that the merchants suspend trade for the remaining short time that it could last; if local revenues were cut off by such temporary suspension of business the whole question of the occupation of the city might quickly be settled. This, however, was a matter in which the merchants would have to act by and for themselves, as it was not a case for armed interference.

On May 15th, however, word was received from Mr. Saulnier that the authorities contemplated levying a heavy war tax by armed force upon the

inhabitants, including citizens of the United States. This demanded prompt action. Only a few days before that, Captain Aynesley had received a despatch from the British Minister in Mexico, saying that all diplomatic relations had ceased between the Imperial authorities and the representatives of foreign powers. So disquieting had been the tenor of that communication that Captain Gröller of the "Elizabeth," in his anxiety to obtain authentic news of his Prince, had gone the length of begging Captain Roe to ask permission for him to send a courier to the capital, which was accorded him. In the face of this exposé of the situation, Bureau's action seemed perfectly indefensible. Communicating hastily with the English and French commanders, Roe induced them to accompany him to the city, where they called the three consuls together, and then requested Señor Bureau to attend, which he did. When they were all assembled, Captain Roe addressed the Commissary and informed him that it had come to his knowledge that certain extraordinary and high-handed proceedings were threatening Americans. Bureau decidedly and emphatically denied all and every design to annoy citizens of the United States or any other friendly nation, and pledged his word that they should be respected in all their rights and liberties; he furthermore begged to be informed if at any time in the future there should seem to be cause for complaint. This

sounded, if any thing, too plausible and courteous, and knowing the craftiness of the speaker, and knowing also the universal distrust among Imperialists regarding the attitude of the United States, Roe thought best to make capital of it, and therefore replied that serious affairs would certainly grieve him very much ; that while there were within reach at Tampico, Brazos, and New Orleans an army and a fleet, it would be a matter of deep regret to him to be forced to call upon them for assistance. This little piece of bluster had its effect, and the war tax was not levied. In the city of Mexico and other places a like protecting arm would have been gladly welcomed to avert a similar blow.

At this juncture the fleet was increased by the arrival of another English man-of-war, the "Barra-couta." As her commander was junior in rank to the commander of the "Jason," his arrival did not in any way nullify the good effect of the *entente cordiale* existing between Aynesley and the other captains ; on the contrary, he now had an increased force at his command.

In the meanwhile, matters of serious import were occurring in the interior. The treachery of Colonel Lopez had borne its immediate fruit, and, towards midnight of the 16th of May, a note was received on board the "Tacony," from General Benavides, announcing that Querétaro had fallen, and that

Maximilian and his officers were the prisoners of President Juarez.\*

When the Prince cast his lot for good or ill with those that had offered him a crown and a throne, he fully appreciated the dangers of his situation, but with his characteristic gallantry braved all perils. The end had now come, and he was a prisoner in the hands of fierce and angry men. The intelligence caused no surprise to Commander Roe, who had long expected it, and had matured his plans. Knowing, as he and others did, the difference in the temperaments of the people of Mexico and of the United States ; knowing also to what desperate

\* It is not generally known that the officer to whom the Prince delivered up his sword was an American, Colonel Geo. M. Green.

This gentleman went to Mexico in the darkest days of her desperate struggle, at the head of a body of fellow countrymen, mostly veterans of the Union armies, but reinforced afterwards by many gallant ex-wearers of the gray. At the Rio Grande, the extreme limit of Mexican territory, they met President Juarez, pursued and harassed by the Imperial forces, but still undaunted. Drawing fresh inspiration from the appearance of this staunch little band, he formally enrolled it in his army as the "Legion of Honor," and issued a fresh appeal to his despairing countrymen, in which he but thinly veiled the hope of armed assistance from the United States Government. The patriots rallied ; from that hour the tide of battle turned. From Chihuahua to Querétaro victory followed victory, unchecked save in one instance : surprised by a superior force at Zacatecas, the Liberal army was completely routed, and so impetuous was the charge of the enemy that Juarez and all his Cabinet would probably have been captured, and the Liberal government extinguished, but for the Legion of Honor, who threw themselves into the narrow defile of the Bufa and checked the onslaught long enough for them to escape.

When the remains of the devoted Carlotta regiment surrendered to the Legion of Honor at Querétaro, Colonel Green allowed Prince Maximilian to retain his sword, and took him, in custody, to General Corona.

straits the patriots of the former country had been driven, little hope could be derived from the remembrance of the clemency shown to the leader of the gigantic rebellion so recently subdued in the powerful republic north of the Rio Grande. The difference in the positions of the two governments was one of degree rather than fact. Mr. Jefferson Davis was not an invader, but had organized and prosecuted a colossal movement against the integrity of his own country. Prince Maximilian was a foreigner, and had been seated on the Mexican throne by foreign arms. Both were finally defeated, and both became prisoners of war. To the mind of the American commander at Vera Cruz, compelled to think and act without diplomatic inspiration, the possible contrast between the course of the two republics, in these not altogether dissimilar circumstances, was as striking as it was full of food for reflection. The weight of a republican government had been lightly felt in Mexico, and its obligations had hung loosely upon the people. For many years of their history, pronunciamientos, insurrections, revolutions had been of such frequent occurrence that government and people alike had become familiarized with them. Political capacity had not in past years attained to much development, and the nation was passing through the hard school of experience on its way to a better and more stable administration. Parties of opposition in that

country almost always assumed a belligerent attitude, and a resort to arms was frequent. Insurrection and rebellion in the outlying provinces were not so serious things as they were in the United States; familiarity made the offence a light one. But when the fact was presented of a foreign power establishing in Mexico a monarchical form of government, with an alien prince at its head, the country had blazed forth in passion and defiance; and the anger against the Notables, the domestic traitors who had offered the throne to the alien, was only eclipsed by the hatred of that alien. The question now was, Might not the popular passion be bent and swayed, and the dictates of humanity as well as policy score a triumph in Mexico as in the United States?

Immediately upon the receipt of the brief but pregnant despatch, Captain Roe had the gig manned, and, at that late hour, pulled alongside the "Jason." Calling the captain from his bed, he frankly gave him the despatch to read, saying that he now desired the co-operation of himself and the Austrian captain. There was no time to lose; every effort must be made to save the Prince's life. He wrote a note to the count, announcing the fact of the capture of Maximilian at Querétaro, and stating that Captain Aynesley would explain in full the proposition now agreed upon between them. The English captain consented to go out to the "Elizabeth," anchored at the outer reefs, and urge