

city and castle within three days, beginning at noon of the 20th, and as an earnest of this the commanding general, Antonio Taboada, was allowed or induced to resign, and take passage in the Spanish mail steamer "Ciudad Condal" to Havana. This officer was strenuously opposed to entering into any negotiations with the Liberals for the delivery of the city, with the defence of which he was entrusted, and it seems probable that his voice was potent in causing Bureau's many vacillations. As the officer upon whom the command would next devolve was less irreconcilable and quixotic, and foresaw the necessity of ending the conflict in one way or another, it was decided that General Taboada should depart.

The only element of discord now remaining was the redoubtable Foreign Legion. This band of mercenaries, recruited from the scum of the military services of nearly all nations, had received its distinctive appellation almost from the very first, neither Spaniard, Frenchman, nor Austrian being willing to own it. As in all such motley congregations, the excellence of the discipline was greatly dependent upon circumstances. Being now subjected to great privations, and defrauded of their pay (the one thing for which they were hired to fight), the members of that body were individually turbulent, and greatly inclined to be so collectively, and their presence was a standing menace to law and order. In their desire to conciliate or appease this dreadful

band, by paying them what was indeed their legitimate due, the merchants of the city had consented to withdraw their merchandise from the bonded stores and pay the duties on it. General Benavides had also given guarantees of safety to all concerned in the Imperial cause, provided the arrangement for the delivery of the city to him should be carried out within the said three days.

The latest news from the interior was in a despatch to General Benavides, that, on the 15th, General Marquez had made a second attempt to cut his way through the forces investing the city of Mexico, but had been driven back with severe loss. The terrible opening of the morning of the 19th of June at Querétaro was not yet known, and there were no extraneous causes to prevent the carrying out of this fourth agreement regarding Vera Cruz. But on the 20th, the day of the "Tacony's" arrival, Señor Bureau had another of his remarkable, and one might almost say convenient, fits of illness, and was unable to treat personally with the Liberal general, so hostilities were resumed.

This was the condition of affairs revealed to Commander Roe. The mere fact of the town not having capitulated during all this time, when every thing had seemed so propitious at the time of his leaving, seemed pregnant with dire possibilities, and it was in the anticipation of serious trouble that he sent the order for the "Yantic" to come there from

Tampico. This was on the 22d, on the same day that the news came that the city of Mexico had surrendered to General Porfirio Diaz.\* Marquez had suddenly disappeared, the evening before, leaving General Tabera, with a demoralized garrison, to bear the odium of a defence protracted far beyond the rules or necessities of civilized warfare; it was only curious that a man so plainly marked by a scar on his face, and so well known, should have succeeded in effecting his escape.

The next day came the news of that sad event, over which history bends with moistened eyes, that plunged two reigning families of Europe into grief, and many others into mourning. The premature ending of the gallant young Prince's life was heralded through the columns of the *Concordia* of June 20th, published at Orizaba, in the following terms:

"Ferdinand Maximilian, of Hapsburg, Archduke of Austria, in league with Napoleon III. to rob Mexico of its independence and institutions, usurper of its sovereignty, calling himself emperor, overthrown by the national will, and made prisoner by the republican forces in Querétaro, on the 15th of May, 1867, and judged by the law upon offences against the independence of the nation of the 25th of January, 1862, and sentenced by the respective council of war to the extreme penalty, was executed

\* Now President of Mexico.

in Querétaro, on the 19th of June, 1867, at seven o'clock in the morning, together with his ex-Mexican generals, Miramon and Mejia. Peace to his ashes."

It was at an early hour of that Sabbath morning that a messenger from Camp Casa Mata brought to the "Tacony" a copy of the brief despatch that had been received. Pulling alongside of the "Elizabeth," the American commander roused the Austrian from his morning slumbers. The two officers met in the cabin, where the count, standing in his night-dress, scanned eagerly his visitor's face, and exclaimed: "My friend, you have brought me evil news. They have killed the Emperor. They have murdered my prince." It was not necessary to answer in words. The despatch was handed him in silence. For a moment the Austrian, tall, athletic, and stalwart, stood speechless, stricken dumb by the tiny paper he held in his hand. "Yes; they have murdered him; it was murder; for was he not a prisoner of war?" And that strong man wept; his passionate sense of loyalty, his affectionate devotion to the brother of his emperor, caused tears to stream down his manly face.

It was a sad Sunday for the officers and crews of the ships at Sacrificios. The sympathies of Austrians, French, English, and Americans, the hopes and fears of all, had run in a single channel of common accord, and the futility of all efforts cast a

gloom over berth-deck and ward-room alike; while the flags displayed at half-mast expressed the official sympathy of all countries represented, for the one that had just sustained so great a loss.

Later in the day Captain Gröller came on board the "Tacony" and asked as a last favor that Commander Roe should appeal to President Juarez in his behalf and that of the Austrian court, to allow him the privilege of receiving the remains of the late Prince on board the "Elizabeth" for the purpose of conveying them to Vienna. Only too glad to do all he could for his friend, Roe immediately addressed a letter to the Mexican President to that effect, adding: "As I conceive his prayer to be one of tender humanity and of affection for his unhappy and bereaved family, I have the honor to beg also that his request may be granted."

This was immediately forwarded through the courtesy of General Benavides, and the remains did finally reach Austria, though not until Admiral Tegethoff, the hero of Lissa, came over not long afterwards to lend weight to the same request made through diplomatic channels.

The news of the fall of the city of Mexico and the execution of Maximilian caused a profound stir among the troops in Vera Cruz. The officers met in an impromptu council and resolutions were declared that the town should not be surrendered unless a heavy sum were paid each man. Bureau,

although sick, opposed this vehemently and with commendable firmness, and, backed staunchly by one general officer, resolved that the surrender should take place. He arrested General Cuevas, the leader of the foreign contingent and an adherent of Santa Ana, and requested the United States Consul to visit the head-quarters of the Liberal army, and make final stipulations for the surrender, the French Consul guaranteeing to keep the Foreign Legion in subjection. So Mr. Saulnier, on the morning of the 23d, took advantage of the "Jason's" cutter being in the harbor, to go down to the fleet, accompanied by a *parlementaire*, and was then landed abreast the camp.

In this interview General Benavides showed a spirit of humanity worthy of all praise. Orders had been received from General Diaz not to treat with the Imperial forces further, unless they laid down their arms and surrendered at discretion; but knowing the temper of the besieged, and desirous of avoiding all unnecessary bloodshed, he took upon himself to remain bound by promises made before the receipt of the order. There was indeed no shadow of reason for any longer hesitation on the part of the Imperialists. Vera Cruz was the only place in Mexico now held by them; their Emperor was dead, and the regency that had been appointed was scattered and powerless. In point of fact the general disposition was at last to yield, but

there remained that Foreign Legion. Mercenaries are ever apt to be treacherous and turbulent, and the hirelings in Vera Cruz remained true to the traditions of their cloth. On the 24th Captain Roe received the following letter from the consul :

CONSULATE OF THE U. S. A.,  
VERA CRUZ, June 24, 1867.

COMMANDER F. A. ROE,  
U. S. S. "Tacony."

DEAR SIR:—At the request of Don Domingo Bureau I beg of you to come up with your ship immediately into the harbor; the difficulty is with the foreign troops. Bureau sends out a flag of truce at 11.30 o'clock, A.M. As this is secret I dare not ask a pilot.

Yours truly,

[Signed,] E. H. SAULNIER,  
*U. S. Consul.*

Come up immediately.

Such a letter spoke volumes. Fires were immediately spread in the boilers, and the stream anchor was weighed; the drum sounded to quarters, the battery was cleared for action and the guns loaded. While these preparations were being made, Captain Roe recognizing the fact that the fighting power of the "Tacony" was none too great, and that more harm than good might be done by their going up alone, went on board the "Jason" and represented to her captain that it was now a question of acting up to the spirit of their orders and taking steps to protect life and property. The delay in surrender-

ing the city was contrary to the usages of war and the scenes that might be enacted by rioters were repugnant to enlightened humanity. Furthermore, apart from the desirability of displaying the additional force vested in the "Jason," the fact of a ship taking such action flying the flag of a country which had recognized the Mexican Empire, and Prince Maximilian as its emperor, would be the more apt to cause reflection among any officers that might have a vestige of authority remaining. As the United States had never ceased to recognize and entertain and express friendly feelings for the Juarist government, the advance of the "Tacony" alone might be construed as simply one of national offence and might add to the probabilities of a conflict.

It did not take long to persuade the gallant Aynesley; he consented to co-operate with the American gun-boat, and at four the two vessels got under way together and stood up for the harbor, the stately "Jason" leading. Entering by the north passage, the Englishman came to within easy range of the northwest bastion of the castle. The "Tacony," drawing much less water, being only of about half the tonnage of the "Jason," rounded the latter's stern and passed on southward into the inside channel and harbor, between the castle and the city landing; a hawser was run out from the starboard quarter and secured to a heavy ringbolt in the castle wall

for the purpose of keeping the ship broadside to the castle, and also to the cooling breezes from seaward. In this position the "Tacony's" battery bore on the north bastion, Vera Cruz, and on the city, covering the "Jason"; and the "Jason" flanked the castle. No guns then mounted in San Juan could command them, but the infected air from the castle, where "Yellow Jack" was holding high carnival, came direct to the "Tacony" and presented a danger well appreciated by her commander, but one that had to be faced.

Both ships kept steam up all night, and their chains ready to slip, and every preparation was made to meet any emergency that might arise. The "Baracouta" also weighed anchor and took up a position about a quarter of a mile outside the "Jason," but within range.

The next morning peremptory orders were received through the consuls from the officer in command of the castle, for both vessels to move from their positions and leave the harbor under penalty of being sunk at their moorings. The order was politely but firmly rejected. The commanders claimed the rights of treaties which had not been abrogated by the late Imperial government, and alleged the dangerous attitude of the excited populace in the city towards all foreigners, in view of which they deemed their presence necessary; and therefore they could not change their anchorage.

No special preparation seemed to be made to carry out the threat. An armed schooner, flying the Imperial flag, changed her berth, and anchored off the "Tacony's" port quarter, but that was not very alarming. Every thing seemed placid, and as the evening came and wore on, the officers sat on deck with their pipes in the moonlight, enjoying the light airs coming in from the eastward, the last dying efforts of the sea breeze, which alone makes the summer heat of Vera Cruz tolerable. The watch were sleeping at their guns. Suddenly the quiet was broken by a low creaking sound coming from the castle, so faint that it might not have been heard had the breeze been stronger, but loud enough to be recognized by a seaman's ear as the straining of a heavy tackle. Night glasses were quickly brought into play, and the parapets swept, finally leading to the discovery of groups of men collected and apparently at work in the northwest angle which commanded the "Tacony." Not a voice was heard, not an order given, but the irregular, peculiar sounds of blocks creaking and ropes surging with heavy weights were unmistakable.

No. 2 port gun was immediately transported over to the starboard side, and that whole battery, thus reinforced, trained on those groups of men. The gig was called away, and Mr. McGowan was sent to the "Jason" to notify her commander of what was transpiring. In his laconic note, Captain Roe

said: "They are mounting heavy guns on the in-shore parapet. I shall be at my lock-strings at *day-break, not daylight.*" The answer came back, grand in its simplicity: "A shot fired at one ship will be answered by both."

It was a dangerous position, especially for a side-wheel steamer, with the machinery above water, exposed to a plunging fire that might instantly sink her, or at least cripple her beyond repair. To a certain extent remaining there involved a cool calculation of chances; the experiences of a long war at home had led the officers of the American vessel to think that a first shot rarely takes effect, and the shower of grape and canister that their five heavy guns and as many howitzers were ready to belch forth at the flash of the enemy's pieces, would probably cause such havoc as to make the second shot, if ever fired, as harmless as the first.

The chain was hove in, until the anchor was "up and down," so that a turn of the engines would drag it off into deep water until opportunity should offer to lift it. The steepness of the shore aided in this, as every fathom of movement deepened the water. A sharp axe was also laid near the bitt where the hawser was belayed, ready to sever it at a stroke.

And so the night wore away, officers and men anxiously awaiting the approach of dawn, and keeping the guns pointed at suspicious-looking prominences on the uncertain silhouette of the northwest

bastion. As the first gray streaks of daylight appeared and grew in the east, these threatening objects began to loom out more distinctly from the dark edge of the castle wall; and soon two guns were discerned pointing on the deck of the "Tacony," and a heavy rifle at the "Jason." These were fully manned, the crews standing with lock-strings in hand and rammers and sponges ready. The gunners there certainly realized that a similar state of preparation existed on board the two ships; and the minutes seemed to lengthen to hours as the adversaries looked at each other through the sight bars, occasionally touching an elevating quoin, or giving a slight heave with a handspike to keep perfect their aim. All seemed to depend upon the caprice or pride of General Gomez, the commander of the castle, who, now that the Imperial cause was at an end, had nothing to gain and nothing to lose by a conflict, and upon whose voice or gesture depended the fate of probably one ship and the lives of many men. To his honor, be it said, his pride did not succeed in leading him to pursue the desperate course which it had prompted. His adversaries were not to be daunted, and he apparently accepted the situation. As by a common impulse, though probably in obedience to a silent order, the gunners of the castle finally broke from their pieces and dispersed, and the great tension was relieved. The battery was kept loaded and trained, but the

crews could "relieve their quarters," and proceed to the routine work of the morning watch.

It was not long before messengers from the English and American consuls brought word off that Señor Bureau, finding that the control of affairs was slipping from his grasp, had deserted his post, and fled—no one knew how, nor when, nor where. It was thought that he had gone on board the "Elizabeth," and Mr. Saulnier, in his report to the Department of State, said that such was the case. The only circumstance to throw any doubt upon that was that the Austrian vessel had gone to sea, to New Orleans, the evening before, at 6.30, and if he had sought refuge on board of her, it must have been in broad daylight, and the fact must have been known to some of his subordinates. It seemed possible that he might have gone on board the *Phlégéton*, and afterwards, when affairs had become more settled, Captain Roe said, jokingly, to the French commander: "Come now, Pritzbuër, where have you got that fellow stowed? and what are you going to do with him?" But the only answer to be elicited was: "Ah, well, now, capitaine, ne vair mind, ne vair mind."

At all events the Imperial Commissary had not stood upon the order of his going, but had gone; and the city was without a municipal government. The senior military commander was General Gomez, and there was much speculation as to the line of

conduct he would pursue, as, under the circumstances, no civil officer would, at that juncture, have undertaken to set up authority against him. He did not leave the community long in doubt. Immediately upon hearing of the flight of Bureau, he sent an officer to the American consul to request an interview. By this time the English, American, and French captains had gone on shore to see what could be done to arrange matters, and had met at the English consulate, where they found all the consuls, except that of Spain. The situation was rapidly but carefully discussed, the danger of the situation being fully realized. There was intense excitement throughout the city, and the lower classes of both parties were ready to break out at any moment. The members of the Foreign Legion, too, were wandering about the streets, armed and ready for any deed of rapine and violence.

When General Gomez's request came, it was hailed with joy, as it seemed to foretell some solution to the problem. He was at once invited to the British Consulate, and soon appeared, with some twelve or fourteen officers. Marching up the long, wide hall at the head of his staff, he presented himself in ceremonious form to the civil and naval officers assembled. He was a stately soldier, and a gentleman by birth and education; his hair and close-cut beard were plentifully sprinkled with gray, and to have seen his stern and massive features