



Maximilian in Mexico

Sara Yorke Stevenson

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Excerpt: ...of an armed invasion of an unwilling land, it was quite another thing to organize it upon a permanent basis. As Prince Napoleon-familiarly known as Plon-Plon-very wittily remarked later, "One can do anything with bayonets, except sit upon them." ("On peut tout faire avec des baionnettes, excepte s'asseoir dessus.") For over two years Napoleon III endeavored to make Maximilian perform the latter feat-with what result we all know only too well. III. THORNS The details of Maximilian's court once settled, and the code of etiquette to be used adopted, the new sovereign started forth upon a tour of the provinces, to present himself to the loyalty of his subjects. The Empress remained as regent, to govern under the guidance of the Commander-in-chief. Ovarions had everywhere been prepared, and a semblance of popularity, so dear to Maximilian's heart, was the result. But immense sums were expended, and more precious time was wasted. Upon his return, Mexican society turned out en masse to do him honor. We all sallied forth in a monster cavalcade by the Paseo de la Vega to meet him some miles out of the city, and escort him back to the palace. All this was pleasant and exciting, but wise heads saw that this was no time for idle pleasure, and some impatience was manifested at this pageantry. Then began a series of administrative experiments. Many projects were mapped out with a view to placing Mexico abreast of the most advanced countries of the civilized world. Among other premature efforts made at this time, when the young Emperor gave fullest flight to his dreams, was a Department of the Navy. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate how whimsical was the mind of the Austrian ex-admiral and how slight was his grasp of the situation. Long-postponed issues, involving vital questions of policy and of administration, were awaiting his decision, and he busied himself with frivolities and with impossibilities. These early days gave the keynote of his three...

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