



Recollections of Mexico: The Last Ten Months of Maximilian's Empire (Latin American Silhouettes)

Samuel M. Basch

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'The events described herein are intended to be a new public contribution to the history of the Mexican Empire. I have seen and experienced these events during the most memorable months of my life.' With these words, an unlikely individual began to pen an invaluable historical memoir. What started as a volunteer mission to Mexico quickly thrust Samuel Basch, an obscure Austrian medical doctor, into the role of confidant and personal physician to Maximilian, emperor of Mexico. Keenly aware of the magnitude of the drama surrounding him and his position as an insider, Basch kept daily notes and astutely observed the court intrigues and other events of his days with the Emperor. His carefully gathered information was then crafted into a compelling firsthand narrative of the last months of Maximilian, who had been persuaded in 1864 to take the throne as part of Napoleon III's scheme to establish an empire in Mexico. Basch begins his account by chronicling the last months leading up to the overthrow of Maximilian by Mexican Republicans. He recounts the defeat of the Emperor's army, his subsequent capture, and his execution by firing squad on June 19, 1867. Basch describes his own interactions with the Emperor as well as the broader context of Maximilian's rapidly crumbling hold on power. Written in a detached yet often sentimental style, *Recollections of Mexico* has been masterfully translated and annotated by Fred D. Ullman, a distant relative of Dr. Basch. Offering scholars a rare authoritative source on this little-known, yet important, period in Mexican history, this memoir also will be a unique supplement in courses on nineteenth-century Mexico.

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