



CALIFORNIA

FORBES



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1839

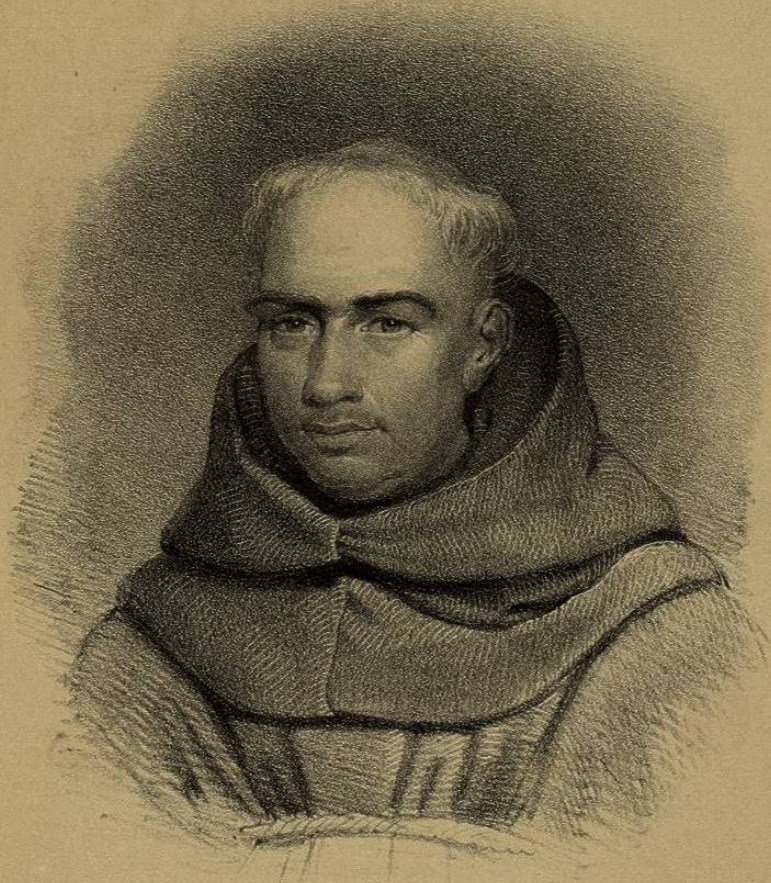


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S. Drummond Pinx. Marc. 1832.

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FATHER ANTONIO PEYRI (Æt 67)

Missionary at San Luis Rey, Upper California.

from 1799 to 1832.

Pub^d by Smith, Elder & Co. Cornhill.

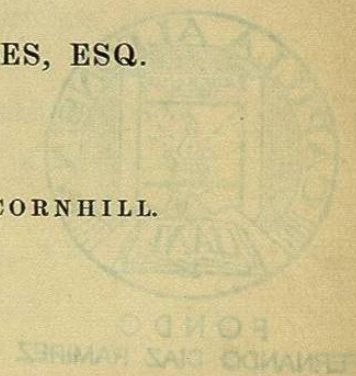
CALIFORNIA:
A HISTORY
OF
UPPER AND LOWER CALIFORNIA
FROM THEIR FIRST DISCOVERY TO THE PRESENT TIME,
COMPRISING
AN ACCOUNT OF
THE CLIMATE, SOIL, NATURAL PRODUCTIONS,
AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE,
&c.
A FULL VIEW OF
THE MISSIONARY ESTABLISHMENTS AND CONDITION
OF THE FREE AND DOMESTICATED INDIANS.
WITH AN APPENDIX RELATING TO
STEAM NAVIGATION IN THE PACIFIC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH A NEW MAP, PLANS OF THE HARBOURS,
AND NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

BY ALEXANDER FORBES, ESQ.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER AND CO. CORNHILL.

1839.



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FONDO
FERNANDO DIAZ RAMIREZ

TO

JOHN FORBES, M.D. F.R.S.

&c. &c. &c.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I herewith send you, such as it is, my work on California, in which I have attempted to give some account of that very remarkable and little-known country. If, on perusing my papers, you deem them worthy of publication, let them be published; but, in that case, you must not only be the Editor of my book but its foster-father: and as it usually happens with adopted children that they are more indebted to those who train them to manhood than to those who give them existence, so it may well be that my "California", if found to possess any merit by the public, shall owe more to your care than to the capability of its original author. I need not tell you how little accustomed

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I am to literary labours of any kind; and you well know that my present position puts it even out of my power to take advantage of those emendations or improvements which are apt to suggest themselves during the progress of a work through the press. In all these things, then, I claim the help of your more experienced hand, and trust implicitly to your judgment and kindness.

Should you decide on publishing my history of California, I request that you will place this letter at its head, as a DEDICATION to yourself; as, whatever be its fate as a book, I am most desirous that it should, at least, bear witness to all those of its readers who know either you or me, with what sincere esteem and regard

I always am, my dear Brother,

Yours faithfully and affectionately,

ALEXANDER FORBES.

Tepic, 22nd. October, 1835.

PREFACE.

THE chief part of the following work was transmitted from Mexico to the editor three years ago. Circumstances, which it is unnecessary here to mention, deferred its publication to the present time. This delay, although in some respects to be regretted, has been attended with several advantages. It has enabled the author to forward to the editor some additional matter of importance, particularly the account of the recent declaration of independence by California. This and other additions have been inserted in their proper places.

In another respect, also, the delay in the publication has perhaps been rather fortunate than otherwise. The changed relations of California with Mexico, and the new relations with other states thence likely to accrue;—the existing position of Mexico in regard both to France and England;—and, above all, the great interest just now excited in the commercial world by the projected

improvement between the different Spanish-American states and between Great Britain and them, by means of Steam Navigation ;—all these will, probably, render the work more attractive to many readers at the present moment, than it would have been three years ago.

The greater part of the contents of the volume, however, the editor believes, stands in no need of any adventitious help to make it interesting to most readers. The ample details which it contains of the *Spiritual conquest* (as it has been called) of California,—that is, of the entire subjection of the native inhabitants by the Spanish missionary priests ; and the striking view which it presents of the singular system of civil polity and ecclesiastical slavery which has been the result of this conquest, and still exists in full activity—are matters which cannot fail to engage the attention of all who delight to view man in novel and strange aspects, and under the influence of circumstances calculated to try the good and the evil parts of his nature. The editor believes that the present volume contains a much fuller account of all these things than is to be found in any other work.

An interest of a very different kind will attach

to that portion of the volume—a large portion—which relates to the natural character and productions of the country, the actual state of its agriculture and commerce, and its capabilities as a field for European colonization. In this respect the present work seems calculated to give rise to much speculation, if not to important enterprises of a practical kind. Respecting the suggestion thrown out by the author, of the chance now offered to the people of Great Britain of getting a footing in Upper California, either by the voluntary cession of the country to the state, or to a company, as a consideration for debts not likely to be otherwise discharged, the editor offers no opinion : it seems, however, to be one not unworthy the attention of the parties involved in the public loan to Mexico, or even of the British government itself.

In preparing the MS. for the press, the editor has, in accordance with the author's wish, added in the body of the volume, various brief extracts, here and there, from the works of travellers who have visited California, and which he thought would render the original account more interesting, by giving some additional details. His

authorities are here, chiefly, La Pérouse, Vancouver, Langsdorff and Beechey,—all of whose works contain very interesting, and, no doubt, very accurate accounts of the state of the country at the time they visited it. These additions, and the arrangement of the original materials in a somewhat more book-like shape, are all the share that the editor can claim in the present work. The author wishes to be considered responsible for everything else whether matter of fact or matter of opinion.

For the matter in the Appendix, however, the editor is solely responsible; but he trusts the author will not hesitate to sanction an addition which must prove both useful and interesting to his readers.

The first document in the appendix—the account of the ports of California by Capt. Hall—is so intimately connected with the subject of the work, that it cannot fail to be regarded as an important addition to its contents; and the editor regrets that he neglected to apply for the information at an earlier period, in order that it might have been incorporated with the topographical details in the third chapter of the second part of the volume.

The remaining documents in the appendix—those relating to the projected plan of Steam Navigation in the Pacific, and a more speedy communication between the western coasts of the American continent and England,—likewise appear to the editor of too much importance in themselves and too intimately connected with the interests of the countries described in the work, to be withheld from the reader. Whatever tends to facilitate and improve the navigation and commerce of the more southern states, must exert a powerful influence on the condition of California, a country which will be found to be pre-eminently calculated to be the granary of South America, and whose present emancipated condition will, doubtless, greatly augment its commerce generally. It cannot be for a moment doubted that if the projected line of navigation were established between Valparaiso and Panama, it would speedily be prolonged northward, to Guatemala, Acapulco and San Blas on the Mexican coast; and from thence to Upper California, either by the Pacific coast to San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco, or along the Gulf northward to the Rio Colorado. The editor has learned from a gentleman acquainted with the

navigation of those seas, that not only the Gulf of California is perfectly navigable by steam vessels to its upper extremity, but that the Rio Colorado is so also, up to its junction with the Gila. As to the probability of the speedy accomplishment of the designs of the projected company, the editor is not in a situation to pronounce an opinion; but when we consider with what gigantic steps STEAM has proceeded since its birth, the wonders it has already wrought in its mere infancy, and the wealth and enterprize of British merchants,—there certainly seems no more reason for doubting that the splendid scheme will be realized at no distant date, than there can be any question as to the vast benefits its accomplishment must confer upon the countries to which it refers.

By the message of the President of the United States to the two Houses of Congress, of the 4th instant, it is clear that by the convention between Russia and the United States, made in April, 1824, no settlements on the N.W. coast were to be formed by Russian subjects, or under the authority of Russia, southward of North latitude, $50^{\circ} 40'$. Nevertheless, long before that convention and ever since, Russia has held her settlement of La Bodega, in

North lat. $38^{\circ} 19'$, as shown by the map. It is not in accordance with the usual spirit of the United States, in enforcing the due fulfilment of all treaties affecting their boundaries, to have acquiesced so long in this flagrant infraction; but, perhaps, as the Russian intrusion was not upon their territories, but upon those of Mexico, they did not think it worth their while to complain. However, by the refusal of Russia to renew the above convention, it appears that the Emperor does not wish that his subjects settled southward of $50^{\circ} 40'$ North latitude, should be subject to any molestation, or that they should be prevented from making fresh settlements in other places.

The editor does not think that the attention of the governments of Mexico, the United States, and Great Britain, has been sufficiently drawn to Russian policy on the N.W. coast of America.

The editor cannot close this prefatory notice without expressing, in the author's name and his own, the obligations they owe to their friends Capt. Smyth, R.N., R. C. Wyllie, Esq. and John Hall, Esq. for their kind assistance in rendering the work more worthy of the reader's attention. For nearly all the pictorial illustrations the author is indebted

to the elegant pencil of Capt. Smyth, which has never failed to perpetuate the more remarkable scenes of the numerous countries visited by him. The plans of all the harbours delineated on the map (with the exception of San Francisco, copied from Capt. Beechey's excellent chart in the Admiralty,) have been furnished by Capt. Hall from his own original surveys. To Mr. Wyllie, whose former residence in Mexico rendered his opinion important on many points, the editor is indebted for several valuable suggestions and much active assistance during the progress of the work through the press.

J. F.

Chichester, Dec. 24, 1838.

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