

## PREFACE.

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THE descriptions of Mexican life, customs, and character embraced in the following chapters are drawn from a close and interested scrutiny of the people of our neighboring Republic during a residence and visits among them including in all a period of about seven years.

Like all foreigners, I was practically a stranger to the marked peculiarities of race, social and business life, government, and religion there to be encountered. In all that I had read on the subject, in books or transient sketches, I found that no one had endeavored to minutely describe certain phases of Mexican life and character, necessary to be understood in order to fully appreciate the people.

First impressions of writers are either glowing on account of novelty, excitement, and varied pleasures, or marked by unfavorable criticisms obtained from a mere surface-view of the new society with which they mingle. I shared in the variety of impressions common to all strangers; but experience with the people and a careful observation of them brought about a change in my opinions as to the fitness of their government and national customs for the varied races of their Republic. And more than this: a closer contact also revealed to me the high culture and splendid attainments of her men and the warm, sympathetic hearts of her women.

The longer I mingled with the Mexican people the more forcibly was I impressed with the fact that they are not properly understood by their Anglo-Saxon neighbors. As this thought grew in my mind day by day, there grew with it a desire to acquaint my own countrymen more intimately with them, and, if possible, secure a fairer appreciation of a people whom it has been too long the custom to decry, but who deserve the highest commendation for their works and institutions, projected and carried out under many difficulties.

To accomplish this task, which I felt was a sacred mission and a tribute that I wished to pay to my Mexican friends, I undertook the present volume. I have not failed to realize that the field is new and that it required a more skillful pen than mine to accomplish all that was intended. The details were so numerous and yet so indispensable to the full delineation of character and customs, that great patience has been necessary to eliminate from the material accumulated much that was interesting but not essential to the main design of the work. Then, too, dealing with so many subjects grouped under general headings, the tendency was to make broken and fragmentary sketches. Every chapter will be found to be complete in itself, however, and all serve to give faithful pictures of the people.

Having lived in close personal contact with the domestic service of the country, I have devoted a few of the initial chapters to this unique and, to us, humorous phase of Mexican life, showing the un-failing inbred adherence to national characteristics.

In submitting this volume to the people of both Republics, it is with the sincere wish that it may, in a measure, lead to a better acquaintance the one with the other, and that this acquaintance may induce both to realize that they have differences and peculiarities naturally adapted to their governments, races and religions. Each can respect and co-operate with the other in peace and harmony, independent and separate as they ever should remain, fixed by nature; but sisters as Republics.

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The book has been illustrated principally by Miss Isabel V. Waldo, a portrait painter of New York, who was in the City of Mexico during

my stay there. Her portraits of the various types are taken from life, and are faithful delineations of the characters they represent.

The illustrations on pages 65, 265, 429, and opposite page 183, were kindly sketched for me by Ramon Casteñada, a young student of the San Carlos Academy.

The initials and outline sketches were drawn by P. G. Cusachs.

While the body of the work has been the result of my personal experiences and observations among the Mexican people, in the historical chapters I have availed myself of the researches of Hubert Howe Bancroft in his histories of Mexico from 1804 to 1861; Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*; also Brantz Mayer's *Mexico; Aztec, Spanish and Republic*, and *Mexico as It Was and as It Is*; also Humboldt's works on Mexico.

F. C. G.