

PRELACE

As for myself, I have been, as it were, but a gatherer of pebbles. Some of them are covered and I give them to you to examine. We must all unite and lay our offerings on the pile, no matter how humble. There will build the monument. It is in this spirit that I submit my account of Mexican Antiquities, and taking the place of a laboring peasant who is willing to transfer the stones I leave to the wisest architect to put each in its place and design its legends and its sculpture.

I have added such statistical data as I could collect from authentic sources upon the Commerce, Agriculture, Manufactures, Coins, Mines, Church, and General Government. In many instances, I have only been enabled to present estimates, but when compared to the details from experienced individuals, whose long residence in Mexico and habits of accurate observation enable them to the greatest confidence. This is all I could do in the absence of full and thorough reports, those annually issued by our Department in Washington.

I have thus endeavored to gratify all readers who desire information on the social condition, religion, antiquities, statistics, revolutions and politics of Mexico. I have endeavored to lift the veil from the Past and the Present. The Mexicans themselves must remove it from the future.



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## MEXICO

## AS IT WAS AND AS IT IS.

## LETTER I.

## VOYAGE TO VERA CRUZ.

I LEFT New-York on the 27th of October, 1841, with a fair wind, and on the twelfth day after, at sunrise, saw the lofty peak of Orizaba, towering above the distant line of the western horizon.

I have rarely beheld a more beautiful sight than this was. The maritime Alps, as seen from the Gulf of Lyons, present a spectacle of great majesty and beauty. But this grand and solitary peak, lifting its head more than 17,000 feet above the ocean, the sentinel, as it were, of a land toward which you may still sail for days before you arrive, has struck every traveller with wonder since the days when Cortez first hailed it on his adventurous voyage for the conquest of Mexico.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our vessel has been quite full of passengers in cabin and steerage; merchants, going out to gather in their fortunes in this country; manufacturers, keen and thrifty, with their machinery, ready to take advantage of the ample profits to be reaped in the "cotton line" from the protection of national industry in Mexico; a German student, fresh from his *alma mater*, adventuring for fortune in Vera Cruz, in spite of all competition and the vomito; a gentle maiden, sighing for *somebody* at the end of the voyage; a staunch Scotch operative, with a wife and two children, the latter of whom made up in their little private volunteer squalls for the sea squalls we missed; and last of all, a worthy old Italian fighter, who