

MEXICO  
about 1850

SARTTORIUS MEXICO

F1213

S24

105740



1020001195

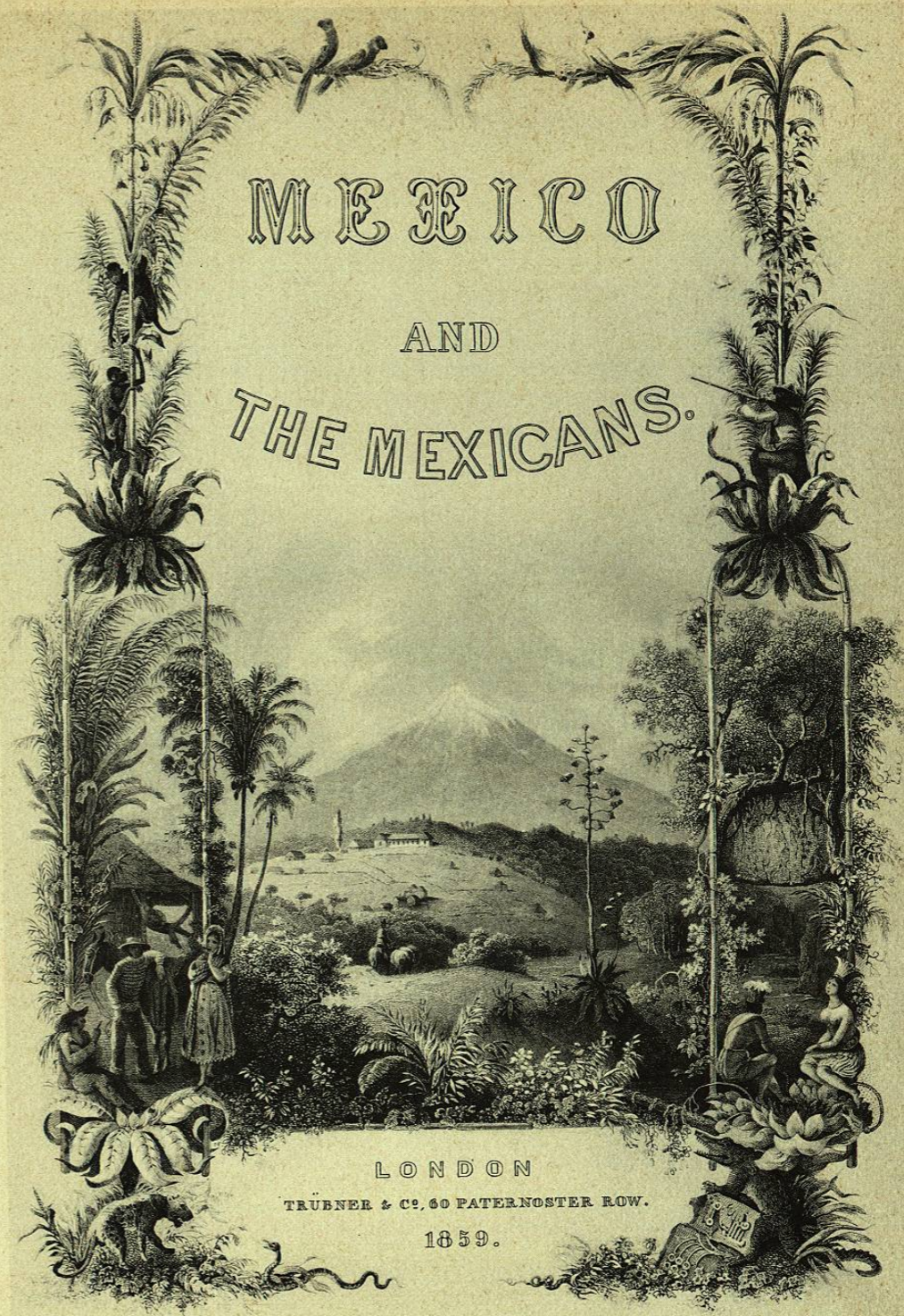


103746

102897179



103749



THIS PLATE WAS MEANT AS COVER FOR THE ENGLISH EDITION

F 1213

S 24



FONDO  
FERNANDO DIAZ RAMIREZ

DEDICATED

TO

**DR. JUSTUS VON LIEBIG,**

AS A MARK OF ESTEEM,

BY

**C. SARTORIUS.**

## P R E F A C E.

---

In the following pages, the indulgent reader must expect neither a book of travels, conscientiously detailing every event from day to day, with the customary adjunct of the bill of fare, nor geographical-ethnological-statistical treatises, nor even a systematical enumeration of the natural history of Mexico: but **views of the country**, sometimes a mere outline taken at a distance, sometimes a more complete picture, drawn in the immediate vicinity, adorned with foliage and creeping lianas — **sketches taken from the life**, in the palace or in the cottage, on the far-extending savannah, or in the mine. During a long series of years I resided in a magnificent country, amidst the people and with them. As a member of the family, I beheld their domestic life, and may, without appearing indiscreet, call attention to many features, which necessarily must escape the scientific traveller, and the professional tourist.

Whoever is desirous of becoming thoroughly acquainted with Mexico, should study Humboldt's classical work: "A political Essay on New Spain." Despite the changes which fifty years have called forth, both in a political and social view, the basis of Humboldt's work is essentially the same, and Germany may be proud of possessing so scientific an architect. His work must always serve as a *point d'appui* for all that future travellers may indite respecting Mexico, whilst their productions can merely complete and extend what he has already done. These pages, therefore, may perhaps be regarded as the ornamental carving and fluting of the great master's strictly correct edifice.

My descriptions of the country and the social condition of the inhabitants are not carefully circled off, but are merely placed in groups or families. I am not skilled in systematising, and have therefore noted down only whatever struck me, and have given this or that in detail, leaving it to the intelligent reader to mark its connection with the whole. My object is to offer a succession of sketches; and there is no dearth of material.

With great interest I have devoted myself to the study of the history and monuments, the habits and mode of life of the Indians; and am enabled to present

much, wanting neither in freshness, nor in close and careful observation. The descriptions of popular features will also connect themselves with the views of particular localities: and here, too, there is no want of matter.

In my lectures, as a member of the Geographical Societies of Darmstadt and Frankfort, I have made allusion to much contained in the present work; and it will perhaps interest the esteemed audience, who were so indulgent towards my feeble endeavours, to find them here more extensively carried out, especially as they are illustrated by the excellent drawings of my friend Moritz Rugendas.

In conclusion I venture to remark, that I have read comparatively little of what has lately been published respecting Mexico; but much of that which I *have* read, is incorrect. It is far from my intention to criticise any of these works; should I, however, have shewn anything in a different light, I would fain request those who deem it necessary to support their views, to do so in a friendly spirit in the public journals, as I myself, in the interests of science, shall ever be ready to respond to whatever objections may be urged against mine.

*Darmstadt.*

C. Sartorius.

## I.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

---

The uniform current of the trade-winds wafts the European traveller, desirous of visiting Mexico, first to the charming islands of the Antilles. If fortune favour him, he will perhaps obtain a glance of Montserrat and Antigua with their lovely villas, shaded by the cocoa-nut tree, or of the abrupt southern coast of St. Domingo, or of the picturesque outlines of the blue mountains of Jamaica; these visions, however, flit past him like the dreams of a tropical night, or like the Castles of the Fairy Morgana, whose quivering outline suddenly vanishes in the deep blue horizon. Until further progress has been made towards the west, it is impossible quietly to regard these appearances and to retain them.

On a fresh October morning we are roused by an unusual bustle on deck; the cry of "Land" is heard, and our destination is before us. To the left, on the level shore, is the port of Vera Cruz and its fort St. Juan de Ulua. Dark forests, gradually sloping upwards, enclose the sandy shore to the west; then follow several mountain-terraces, one commanding the other, till at length, towering above all, the magnificent cones and indented summits of the dark blue Andes seem to support the clear vault of heaven. Majestically rearing their heads over their fellows, are the snowy summits of the Peak of Orizava, glowing with the purple rays of the rising sun, and the wild jagged crater of Perote. From the latter the mountains branch off northwards to the sea, terminating in an abrupt rocky wall on the shores of the Gulf, whilst to the south, the Cordilleras extend in a huge semicircle in the distant horizon.

Regarded as a whole, the coast has the same features, whether we trace it to the south or north. Everywhere we find a narrow level tract of coast, not many miles in width, then a gradual ascent by gently inclining slopes to the spurs of the mountains, and finally to the highlands, which, almost uninterrupted, extend for many hundred miles from north to south, nearly parallel with the coast.

The ship has cast anchor between the fort and the town; a few minutes later we are on the quay. Everything is strange here, the language, dress and complexion of the inhabitants, and the town, with its Andalusian-Moorish trappings. Here we behold a group of negroes and mulattoes gesticulating in the most passionate manner,