



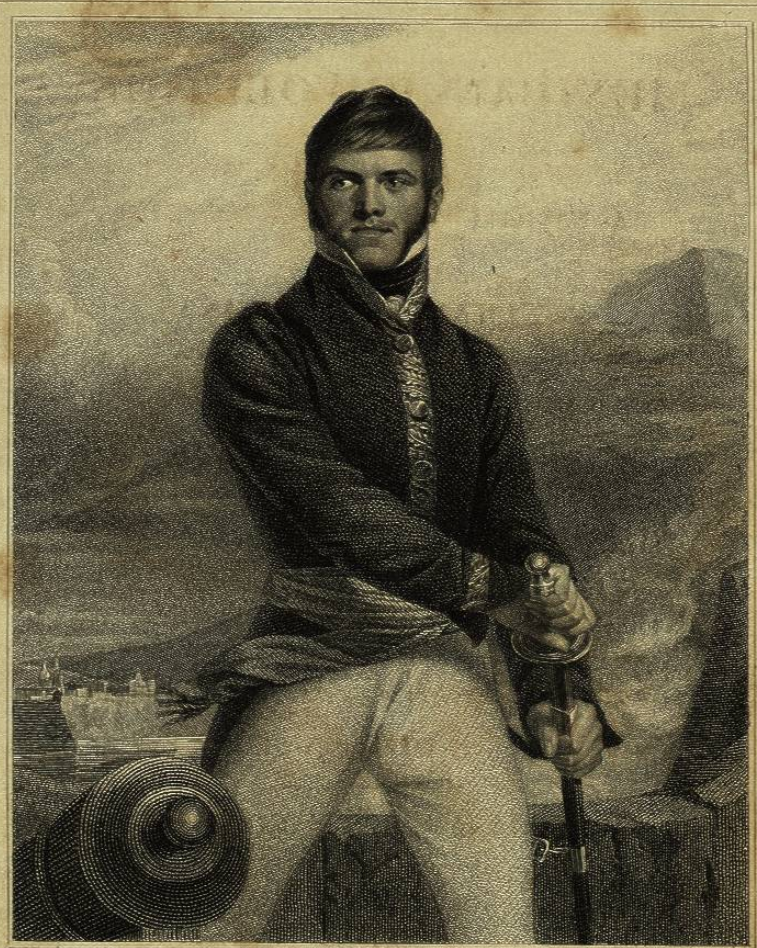
MEMOIRS OF THE
MEXICAN REVOLUTION

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Jas. Harrison, Pinxt.

Thos. Wright, Sculp.

General Xavier Mina,

FROM THE ORIGINAL PICTURE

*Painted a few weeks before he left England.
In the Possession of Tho. Broadwood, Esq.*

London, Pub^d by Lackington, Hughes & Co. Feb^y 20, 1821.

MEMOIRS
OF THE
MEXICAN REVOLUTION;

INCLUDING
A NARRATIVE OF THE EXPEDITION
OF
GENERAL XAVIER MINA.

To which are annexed

Some Observations
ON THE PRACTICABILITY OF OPENING A COMMERCE
BETWEEN
THE PACIFIC AND ATLANTIC OCEANS,
THROUGH THE MEXICAN ISTHMUS, IN THE PROVINCE OF OAXACA, AND AT THE
LAKE OF NICARAGUA;
AND
ON THE VAST IMPORTANCE OF SUCH COMMERCE TO
THE CIVILIZED WORLD.

BY WILLIAM DAVIS ROBINSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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FONDO
PEREZ MALDONADO

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE arduous struggle for independence, so long maintained in the Spanish possessions of America, has, from its commencement down to the present eventful crisis, never once ceased to be an object of deep interest to the world. The extent, the fertility, the rich and varied produce of these possessions, give to them an importance which it is impossible to over-rate, and easily account for the interest which the people of every country—but, most of all, the people of so eminently commercial a country as England—have always taken in this struggle. Here, all classes and descriptions of persons may be said to have espoused the cause of the South Americans. The young, the generous, and the brave, could not remain unmoved spectators of a contest for emancipation from a grievous and oppressive yoke; the philosopher and politician looked to the incalculable influence of the issue, in promoting the welfare of mankind, and adding to the means of human enjoyment; and the merchant and manufacturer saw, in regions hitherto almost closed to commercial enter-

prise, a boundless scene for his operations, and inexhaustible mines of wealth.

All the possessions of Spain in America have been more or less the theatre of hostilities; and details of the different events in most of them have, from time to time, been published, and received with avidity in this country. But we know nothing, or next to nothing, of the progress of the Revolution in Mexico, by far the most important of the possessions of Spain in the New World, whether considered with respect to the richness of its mines, its extent of fertile territory, its population, or its advancement in the arts of civilized life. The names of some of the Revolutionary Chiefs of Mexico have indeed been occasionally mentioned in newspapers, and it is sufficiently known that the celebrated Xavier Mina landed with a small force on the Mexican coast. Extracts, too, from Spanish Gazettes, containing pompous accounts of the defeat of Insurgents, and of the destruction of Mina and his followers, have from time to time found their way here; but this is the whole amount of our knowledge with respect to Mexico.

That no information has yet been received from any of those who have risen against the authority of Spain, is chiefly owing to the peculiar nature of the country. In most parts of America, the population and cultivation are greatest along the sea-coast, and gradually diminish as we

recede from it. But the usual order of things is reversed in Mexico; here the interior is thickly inhabited, while the coasts are almost deserted. The wealth and population are concentrated on an extensive and elevated Table Land, formed by mountains connected with the vast chain of the Andes, which traverses South America throughout the whole of its length. On this Table Land, which is as high above the level of the sea as the passages of Mont Cenis, St. Gothard, or St. Bernard, all the advantages of a temperate climate are enjoyed under the torrid zone: but this delightful region can only be reached by passing through the scorching and thinly inhabited plains of the coast, and by an ascent as difficult as the passages of the Alps. When the Spaniards discovered Mexico, the population was distributed in this manner, and the comparative unhealthiness of the warm regions of the coast has hitherto deterred them from attempting to avail themselves, as they might, of its superior fertility. They have not even a secure station on the Atlantic coast of Mexico, but have hitherto entrusted its maritime protection to the Havannah. Hence the difficulty of obtaining any information, except through Spain, of the events which take place in Mexico. Without possessing a station on the coast, the Patriots can have no communication with other countries, and the most dreadful war may be raging for years in the interior

of Mexico, while the rest of the world, with the exception of Spain, may hardly have even a suspicion of its existence.

Notwithstanding, however, the pains taken by Spain to prevent the world from obtaining a knowledge of the events which have taken place in Mexico since the commencement of the South-American war, an individual has at length succeeded in drawing aside the veil which has hitherto concealed them: Mr. ROBINSON, the author of the following work, an American merchant of respectable connexions, and much esteemed in his own country, has been enabled to give an account of the various operations of the Patriots of Mexico, from the origin of the Insurrection down to a late period, including a very minute and highly interesting account of the operations of Mina, from the outfit of his expedition to its final destruction. This gentleman had opportunities of becoming acquainted, not merely with the transactions of Mexico, but with South-American affairs in general, which have fallen to the lot of very few.

The details of these transactions are given in the Appendix to the following Work, and likewise a full account of the hardships which he endured, in consequence of his visit to that country; for the Spanish government, it would appear, had determined to subject Mr. Robinson to a rigorous imprisonment in a fortress on the coast of Africa.

All intercourse with the American possessions of Spain, without its special permission, is interdicted under the severest penalties; and, therefore, Spain might consider the visit of Mr. Robinson to Mexico punishable, as a violation of its laws, with imprisonment or death. But it appears, that the reason which chiefly induced the Spanish government to adopt this harsh determination, was the knowledge that he was intimately acquainted with the affairs of Mexico: many valuable communications had at different times been made to him, and documents of a very important nature had come into his hands; we can hardly wonder, therefore, that a government pursuing the policy of Spain should wish to prevent Mr. Robinson from laying this information before the world.

The journal of a gentleman who accompanied General Mina from England, and acted for a time as his commissary-general, and the correspondence of the general with various individuals in Europe and the United States, are the authorities of which Mr. Robinson has chiefly availed himself in his account of Mina's unfortunate expedition.

From the romantic nature of the achievements of this gallant warrior and his little band, this part of the work will be read with deep interest by every description of readers. The historical narrative will be found as instructive as it is interesting. It has shewn the world the

feebleness of the tenure by which Spain retains possession of Mexico. A small band, at no time exceeding 308 in number, advanced from Soto la Marina; fought its way into the interior of Mexico, beating on different occasions large bodies of men sent to oppose its advance, and succeeded in forming a junction with one of the revolutionary bands. In his first battle, that of Peotillos, 172 men, with a loss of 56 killed and wounded, beat a force consisting of 680 infantry of the European regiments of Estremadura and America, 1100 cavalry, and a rear-guard of 300. Mr. Robinson maintains—and it is hardly possible to read this narrative without agreeing with him—that if Mina had then had 1000, instead of 150 foreigners, he might have marched at once on the capital of Mexico, and put an end to the authority of Spain;—and that two thousand foreign infantry, under the banners of freedom, led by intelligent and gallant officers, would overturn the Spanish government of Mexico in less than six months from the day of their landing, either on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, or on that of the Gulf of Mexico. Had it been known, that a much smaller force than that which left Europe under General Devereux could have effected the emancipation of the richest and most valuable of all the Spanish colonies, it is more than possible, that long ere this it would have ceased to be in the possession of Spain.

The late revolution in the government of Spain, has, in some degree, altered the relations between that country and America, and given rise to expectations of peace and reconciliation. What the result of the attempts now making with that view may be, it is impossible to say. One thing, however, is certain,—the old colonial system of Spain is for ever destroyed; and whether or not the American possessions of Spain shall hereafter remain connected with it in a state of entire independence, the inhabitants will never again submit to their former exclusion from the rest of the world. They have tasted the advantages of an unrestricted commercial intercourse, and they never will consent to forego them. Civilization and intelligence will follow in the train of commerce; these fine regions, hitherto sacrificed to the narrow and barbarous policy of Spain, will be enabled to avail themselves of the inestimable resources with which they are blessed; and Great Britain will have no cause to regret the efforts which some of her sons have made in the struggle for this emancipation.

The Author has brought forward much valuable information on the subject of a communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Humboldt fixed on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, as the narrowest part of America, and the most favourable on the whole for such a communication. Mr. Robinson fixes also on

this Isthmus, and adduces a number of proofs of the facility with which it might be opened. In his statements on this subject, and indeed throughout the work, he never loses sight of the interests of the country of which he is a subject; and he looks forward with seeming confidence to the day when the fleets of the United States shall protect the entrance to the canal of Tehuantepec. But, whatever may be the future destiny of North America, England is not the power which would reap the smallest benefit from this communication, or which is least interested in promoting it.

The future destiny of America opens a wide field for conjecture, into which we cannot now allow ourselves to enter. We may observe, however, that it requires little foresight to see, that it will soon be productive of great changes in the world. We do not merely allude to the effects which must soon be produced by the application of improved machinery to its mines. Its proximity to Asia will soon give rise to important changes in that part of the world. Mr. Crawford, in his valuable work on the Indian Archipelago, has shewn, that the empire of Japan might be conquered with the greatest ease by an expedition from an American settlement on the Pacific; and, thus, parts of Asia, protected from Europe solely by their distance from it, may soon probably fall under the domination of America.

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