

CONTENTS

CHAPTER V

Reflection on the state of the Republic after the late
victory of the Republic—General Don Pedro de
y Luna—The late and unfortunate
General Don Pedro de Luna—General Don
Juan de Lara—General Don Juan de Lara
after the late command of the Republic—
.....

It is incumbent on every person who presents a state-
ment of important events to the public, to unfold the
sources from whence he derives his information. The
writer therefore, in the first instance, with great pleasure
acknowledges his obligations to Mr. James A. Brush, a
gentleman who accompanied General Mina from Eng-
land to Mexico, and was finally appointed his commis-
sary-general.

The journal of Mr. Brush was submitted to the in-
spection of the writer, with the liberty of making such
use of it as was thought proper, and from it he compiled
the narrative of the military operations of General
Mina, of the fidelity of which not the least doubt exists
in his mind; indeed, all the essential facts contained in
the narrative were fully corroborated by information
derived from various sources, while he was in Mexico,
and by the testimony of the few surviving officers of
Mina's expedition, whom he met with in Mexico and in
the United States, and who were carefully consulted on
the subject.

To John E. Howard, Esq. of Baltimore, he likewise
feels under particular obligations, for having furnished

INTRODUCTION.

vii

It is incumbent on every person who presents a state-
ment of important events to the public, to unfold the
sources from whence he derives his information. The
writer therefore, in the first instance, with great pleasure
acknowledges his obligations to Mr. James A. Brush, a
gentleman who accompanied General Mina from Eng-
land to Mexico, and was finally appointed his commis-
sary-general.

The journal of Mr. Brush was submitted to the in-
spection of the writer, with the liberty of making such
use of it as was thought proper, and from it he compiled
the narrative of the military operations of General
Mina, of the fidelity of which not the least doubt exists
in his mind; indeed, all the essential facts contained in
the narrative were fully corroborated by information
derived from various sources, while he was in Mexico,
and by the testimony of the few surviving officers of
Mina's expedition, whom he met with in Mexico and in
the United States, and who were carefully consulted on
the subject.

To John E. Howard, Esq. of Baltimore, he likewise
feels under particular obligations, for having furnished

him with the greater portion of the facts contained in the biographical sketch of Mina, and indeed for having infused into that sketch more animation than it would have been in his power alone to have given it.

The perusal of the correspondence of Mina with various distinguished individuals in Europe and the United States, from which the writer obtained important information, was politely afforded him by General Winfield Scott, to whom he likewise begs leave to offer his acknowledgments.

The writer has also examined, with much attention, files of the Mexican, Havana, and Madrid gazettes, for the last ten years; and however ridiculous or exaggerated may be their statements of the operations of the royal forces against the patriots, one feature of the story, we may be assured, they have not too highly coloured—*the cruelties exercised by them.*

It is from such indubitable sources, and others of a similar character, which were submitted to his inspection in Mexico, and other parts of Spanish America, as well as from personal observation, that the writer has been enabled to draw the dark-hued picture of Spanish inhumanity which is exhibited in the following pages.

The information embodied in the chapter treating of the Route to the Pacific ocean, has been derived from various Spanish and British authorities: among the latter, William Walton, Esq. of London, and the late celebrated Bryan Edwards, of Jamaica, deserve particular notice. Several important documents relating to this subject, written by intelligent Creoles, were likewise placed in the writer's hands; and he has frequently conversed with individuals who have visited or resided

at the places which he has pointed out as being the most eligible for the cutting of canals, or the construction of roads, so as to give a rapid and certain communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, more especially at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec; of the practicability of accomplishing which, at that place, personal investigation has also convinced him.

As respects the general remarks on Mexico, and the situation, political and civil, of the people of Spanish America, he has endeavoured to divest himself of those prejudices which a citizen of the United States may be supposed to entertain in favour of a people struggling against oppression, and to state faithfully what came under his own personal observation, as well with regard to royalists as revolutionists.

It is now more than twenty-one years since he made his first visit to Spanish America; and, as far as it has been in his power to gather information, he has done so. If he could not obtain all that he desired, it arose from his having constantly to be upon his guard against the jealousies of the Spanish government, and from the difficulty of gaining access to the Spanish archives; but, nevertheless, he flatters himself the reader will find in the work now submitted to his inspection, some facts entitled to consideration, as well from their importance as for their novelty.

It will naturally be asked, how he gained admission into the Spanish territories in America, in contravention to the laws of the Indies? To this it is replied, that his first visit was to Caracas, in the year 1799, where he continued, in the prosecution of extensive mercantile engagements with the Spanish authorities, until the

year 1806. Those engagements were with the approbation of his Catholic Majesty, and consequently his residence in that country, during the time before mentioned, was under the royal sanction. The extraordinary manner in which his interests were sacrificed, and his personal rights outraged, by the bad faith and arbitrary conduct of the Spanish authorities in Caracas, will be found in a statement of his claims on the Spanish government, in the Appendix to these volumes, and to which he particularly refers such of his readers as may feel any curiosity to see the extent of the injuries he has suffered as a merchant, in his intercourse with the Spanish government. As respects his subsequent visits to the Spanish dominions, more especially to Mexico, he is perfectly aware that the government of Spain has said, and will continue to say, that such visits being contrary to her laws and her policy, she had a right to punish him for their infraction. She has, on several occasions during the last ten years, enforced those laws against foreigners, by imprisonment, and in some instances by death.

When the Spanish general Morillo captured Carthage, he seized all the British and other foreign merchants, threw them into dungeons, threatened to try them by a military tribunal, and would unquestionably have shot them, had it not been for the timely interference of the British admiral on the Jamaica station, who despatched a frigate to Carthage, with such communications from the British authorities at Jamaica, as at once settled the question, and compelled Morillo instantaneously to release all the British subjects. The American government likewise sent a vessel of war to

Carthage, and obtained the liberation of several American citizens. If these measures had not been adopted, no mercy nor regard would have been extended to any foreigner who might unfortunately have fallen into the hands of the Spanish government; because not only by the "*Leyes de las Indias*" was it a capital crime for a foreigner to enter the Spanish dominions, without a special authority from his Catholic Majesty, but during the present revolutions in America, the Spanish government have issued various decrees, expressly declaring that all strangers aiding the insurgents, or found residing among them, were to be punished as insurgents, by death. If these decrees have not been executed by the Spanish government, it was by no means for lack of disposition, but from the apprehension of the resentment of those governments whose subjects and citizens held intercourse with the insurgents.

The writer has been thus particular in stating these facts, because they shew that any individual, not engaged in the military or naval service of the insurgents of Spanish America, is under the protection of the laws of nations in favour of all non-combatants; and that any attempt on the part of Spain to infringe this security is a violation of the usages of civilized nations, and a direct outrage against that nation whose subjects may have been thus wantonly punished. It is not only on these principles that the writer feels justified in complaining of the barbarous treatment he has received from the Spanish government, during an *imprisonment of two years and a half*, but because there are some peculiar circumstances attending the affair, which, if he is not greatly mistaken, will excite the indignation and surprise of every unprejudiced reader.

The recital of this case has become the more necessary, because, during his imprisonment in the dungeons of Mexico, he was honoured with the sympathy of his fellow-citizens, and the interference of his government in his behalf. He therefore deems it incumbent upon him to prove, that he was not undeserving of such sympathy and protection. In addition to this, he is anxious to remove all doubts with regard to his conduct, that may have arisen from the misrepresentations made in the public newspapers respecting him; for in some of these he has been called *Doctor* Robinson, and in others it has been asserted that he held a military command in the service of the Mexican insurgents, and was taken prisoner on the field of battle. The writer has not in any one instance violated his neutral obligations as a citizen of the United States. But, while making this assertion, he does not at all hesitate openly to avow, that if an ardent desire to promote the independence of all Spanish America, and more especially of Mexico, constitutes him an enemy of Spain, and criminal in her eyes,—then he is guilty. If the fact of his having visited New Grenada, Caracas, and Mexico, during the political commotions of those countries, for the purpose of ascertaining their actual condition, and of succouring the revolutionists, as a neutral merchant, by all fair and honourable means, renders him an enemy to Spain,—then is he her enemy. If cherishing those sentiments, and a determination to persevere in promoting the independence of South America and Mexico, by every means in his power, consistent with his duties as a citizen of the United States, proves him to entertain criminal intentions towards the Spanish government,—then indeed is he criminal.

Having thus acknowledged all that the government of Spain can possibly lay to his charge, he now invites the attention of the reader to the following detail of facts.

On the 4th of March, 1816, he embarked at New Orleans on board the United States' brig of war *Saranac*, commanded by John H. Elton, Esq. bound on a cruise in the Gulf of Mexico. When he applied for a passage, he stated to the naval commander on that station, Commodore Patterson, that he wished to be landed on the Mexican coast, for the purpose of having an interview with some of the Mexican authorities, on whom he had drafts for a large amount of money, due to certain merchants in the United States. His request was politely acceded to, and Captain Elton received directions accordingly. The author premises this, to shew that he did not depart from the United States in an unauthorized manner, or with an illegal object in view.

On the 4th of the ensuing month, he was landed from the *Saranac*, at *Boquilla de Piedra*, a post then in possession of the revolutionists, on the coast of Vera Cruz. He thence proceeded to the head-quarters of Don Guadalupe Victoria, commandant-general of the patriot forces in the province of Vera Cruz, who received him in the most friendly manner. Upon his explaining the object of his visit to Mexico, General Victoria observed, that although he was unable immediately to pay the drafts on the Mexican government, yet if the writer would remain a few weeks in the country, payment should be made. He was the more readily induced to wait, as he was desirous to view the interesting country in which he then was, and likewise to acquire

correct information respecting the political state of its affairs, in the expectation that it might be such as would justify his entering into some commercial arrangements, as well with the government as with individuals. But he soon discovered that the representations made to him at New Orleans by the Mexican minister, *Don José Manuel de Herrera*, and by *Don Alvarez Toledo*, were destitute of foundation, and indeed that in many points they had deceived him. However, as he received some flattering accounts of the situation of the patriots in the interior, and had a prospect of obtaining the payment of his drafts at a place called *Tehuacan*, he proceeded thither, and was received with every mark of civility by the patriot commandant, *Don José Manuel de Mier y Teran*, who accepted and paid part of the drafts, and promised to discharge the residue in a short time.

He remained at *Tehuacan* until the last of July, and was treated with the greatest hospitality and attention, as well by the general as by the respectable Creoles of the country. At this place he met with *Doctor John Hamilton Robinson*, who was then a brigadier-general in the service of the Mexican patriots, and who had long been a very obnoxious individual to the Spanish government; a circumstance to which the author in part owes his subsequent persecution by the Spanish authorities in Mexico.

The author communicated to General Teran his desire to return to the United States; but as the royalists had recently been successful in the province of Vera Cruz, and had impeded all communication between *Tehuacan* and the coast, it became impossible to return by the

way of *Boquilla de Piedra*, and as Teran was about to undertake an expedition against the port of *Guasacualco*, at the bottom of the Mexican Gulf, on the Isthmus of *Tehuantepec*, the writer resolved to avail himself of that opportunity to leave the country. The conduct of General Teran on that expedition, and the circumstances which caused its failure, will be found detailed in Chapter V. of this work.

A few days after Teran had left *Tehuacan*, on his enterprise against *Guasacualco*, the author followed with his servant, in company with a detachment of troops, who were escorting a sum of money. About sixty leagues from *Tehuacan*, we came up with Teran, who informed us, that he had met with no difficulties in his route; that the few troops which the enemy usually kept in that part of the country, had either fled or joined him; and that, as all the Indians were in his favour, he was confident of reaching *Guasacualco* in a few days. This information afforded satisfaction to the writer, because, although he was a non-combatant, he was aware that, in the event of a battle, no respect would be shewn by the royalists to any person who might fall into their hands.

On the morning of the 8th of September, Teran took possession of the village of *Playa Vicente*, situated on a branch of the river *Tustepec*, which the enemy had abandoned the day previous. The body of the patriot army, encamped on the bank of the river, opposite to the village; intending to cross it in the evening, on rafts to be constructed for the purpose. In the mean time, the general, unapprehensive of danger; passed over to the village, with about fifteen men. The writer

had accompanied him, and was regaling himself with eating pine-apples, in a garden at the extremity of the village, when a sudden discharge of musquetry aroused him from his feelings of security. He immediately beheld Teran and his little party defending themselves against a considerable body of the enemy. The conflict was short: Teran, with one or two of his men, escaped to the river, and swam across, amidst a shower of balls: the rest of the party were cut to pieces.

During this perilous affray, the writer effected his retreat to a small thicket, which afforded him security for the time. He here had ample leisure to reflect upon his situation, and the course which he should adopt to obtain ultimate safety. He conceived it possible that Teran would attack and re-capture the village, in which case he might again have an opportunity of pursuing his route to Guasacualco; and continued to flatter himself with this delusive hope for *five days*, when he became so exhausted by hunger that he could scarcely move. In this wretched condition, and on the point of perishing in the woods, he determined to deliver up his person to the royalists. Accordingly, on the evening of the 12th of September, he crawled from his place of concealment, reached the road to the village, and with great difficulty walked to the head-quarters of the royalists. Being almost covered with mud, and fainting under fatigue and hunger, his appearance and situation excited the surprise and sympathy of the Spanish officers, particularly of the commander, *Ortega*, who in a friendly manner took him by the hand, and inquired his name. As soon as it was mentioned, the officers exclaimed, "Thank God! (*gracias a Dios*) Doctor

Robinson has at last fallen into our hands." They wished to interrogate the writer very particularly; but he declined replying, and requested they would suspend their inquiries until the next morning, for the want of sleep and food had rendered it impossible for him at that moment to gratify their curiosity. They acceded to his wishes, and supplied him with food, a change of clothes, and a hammock in their quarters. The following morning he arose perfectly refreshed, and was prepared to go through the scene which he anticipated. He endeavoured, in the first place, to convince the commander, *Ortega*, that he was a different individual from *Doctor Robinson*; for which purpose he exhibited his passport from the government of the United States: but he found it impossible to remove from the minds of the Spanish officers the fixed impression that he was the Doctor. After some amicable discussion, *Ortega* suddenly assumed a stern aspect, and informed him, that his orders were of the most peremptory nature to put to death all prisoners who fell into his hands; and that he was empowered to deviate from them only when an insurgent voluntarily surrendered his person, and implored the benefit of his Catholic Majesty's pardon (*indulto*). He continued, "In your case, Doctor Robinson, although your presenting yourself to the Spanish authorities has been the result of necessity, yet I am willing to spare your life, provided you claim the protection of the *indulto*; but otherwise, it becomes my painful duty to put you to death." At this critical moment, the eyes of all the Spanish officers were fixed on the writer, who was sensible that on his acceptance or rejection of the proposed terms depended his fate. It was answered,

in the first place, that as he had not borne arms against his Catholic Majesty, nor had done any act in violation of his neutral character as a citizen of the United States, having been among the insurgents as a foreigner and a non-combatant, he considered himself under the safeguard of the laws of nations, and exempt from being considered or treated as an enemy of his Catholic Majesty; and secondly, that he felt a repugnance to ask for the benefit of the royal indulto, because he should thereby tacitly acknowledge himself to be an insurgent. Ortega then said, with a great deal of heat, "Sir, you have been among the insurgents, and must be treated as one; therefore, I once more tender to you the clemency of my sovereign." Perceiving that remonstrance was vain, and that obstinacy in refusing the proffered offer would inevitably lead to the threatened vengeance, the writer was induced to avail himself of the benefit of the indulto. Immediately thereupon, Ortega shook him by the hand with great cordiality, and in the presence of his officers and soldiers extended to him the indulto of his Catholic Majesty. He was then permitted to walk about the village, and indeed no restraint was laid upon his person: he could therefore have easily escaped; but as he had pledged his honour not to violate the conditions of the indulto, presuming that it would be honourably fulfilled on the part of the Spanish government, he was morally withheld from thinking of such an attempt; in fact, it was not his wish to do so, particularly as he expected to be at liberty to proceed to Vera Cruz, and embark for the United States. On applying to the commander for permission to depart, he declared, that it was not in his power to grant it, until

he should hear from the commander-in-chief of the province of Oaxaca, to whom he would write on the subject.

On the 22d of the month, the answer came from Oaxaca; but, instead of the writer's request to be permitted to proceed to Vera Cruz being acceded to, Ortega was ordered to send him under a strong escort to the city of Oaxaca. This measure excited his surprise, and he immediately suspected that it was the intention of the government to withdraw from him the protection of the royal indulto. On the 23d, he proceeded on his route to Oaxaca, escorted by a body of cavalry. He was furnished with a good horse, and treated with every possible kindness, but both by day and night was closely watched.

In all the villages through which he passed, he received the most hospitable attentions from the inhabitants; but when they understood that he had delivered up his person on the faith of the royal indulto, and was still treated as a prisoner, they shook their heads, and appeared to anticipate his fate. Some of these generous Creoles offered, at the hazard of their lives, to assist him in making his escape; but, as he had not yet received any positive proof of the intentions of the government, he determined on his part faithfully to adhere to the conditions of the indulto.

On the evening of the 27th, he arrived at the city of Oaxaca, and was conducted to the government house, where he was presented to the commander-in-chief, Don Manuel Obesa, who received him with great kindness. He stated, that it was his intention to send the writer to the city of Mexico, where *his excellency the*

viceroy would determine whether he was entitled to the benefit of the royal indulto, or not. On the writer's expressing his astonishment at such a breach of good faith, General Obesa observed, that it was sometimes expedient for the viceroy to withhold the benefit of the indultos that had been granted by his officers, but he hoped that in the present case it would be sacredly fulfilled. He added, that the writer must remain in Oaxaca until arrangements were made for conducting him to the city of Mexico; and that, *in order to prevent his being insulted by the populace, a cell should be fitted up for his reception in the convent of St. Domingo, and a strong guard be stationed there for his protection.* Having thanked him for such peculiar marks of his politeness, the writer was conducted to the convent, and placed in a cell which wore the appearance of a dungeon. A soldier was stationed at the door, and another at the window. The head of the convent was a worthy friar (Don Nicolas Medina), whose countenance indicated that he could cherish benevolent feelings even towards a heretic: his subsequent conduct, and that of all the friars of the institution, was marked with the most hospitable and generous attentions.

On the 28th, the commander, his secretary, and the intendant of the province, visited the writer, for the purpose of interrogating him, and of taking his declaration as to the motives which had induced him to visit the country. To the latter point he candidly replied, by stating the facts as they have been previously narrated, but declined answering many of the interrogatories, particularly such as related to the situation and views of the insurgents. He considered many

of the questions as indelicate and ungenerous, more especially as he was deprived of the benefit of the royal indulto, and treated as a prisoner. The commander appeared sensible of the force of these objections, and did not press his inquiries further; but observed, that if the writer hoped to be restored to liberty, he must first give some proof of his no longer being a friend to the insurgents. After a few more remarks, tending to inspire him with confidence in the honour and clemency of the viceroy, the commander departed.

The next day, he was visited by nearly all the principal ecclesiastics of the city, who vied with the friar Medina in their friendly treatment of him, offering him money, apparel, and every thing to make his situation as comfortable as possible. The principal inhabitants of Oaxaca also honoured him with their visits; and indeed all classes of society appeared to take an interest in his situation, expressing their regret that he was not at liberty. It soon became manifest, that the commander's precautions to prevent the writer from receiving insult were entirely superfluous, and that they were probably intended to hinder the populace from giving him more solid evidences of their regard and sympathy than mere expressions of condolence.

Having been refused permission to breathe the fresh air of the convent garden, the writer became more urgent to be sent to Mexico, that he might not any longer be kept in suspense as to his fate. At length, after having been confined in the convent fourteen weeks, an order was received from the viceroy, to send him under a strong guard to the capital. Accordingly, he left Oaxaca, under an escort of sixty infantry and