

México

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MEXICO IN 1827.

VOL. I.



*Shortly will be published.*

## SIX VIEWS

of the great Towns of ZACATECAS, SOMBRERETE, CATORCE, TLALPUJAHUA, GUADALAJARA and VALLADOLID, not included in the present Work. Drawn upon the spot, and engraved by MR. PYE.

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# MEXICO IN 1827.

BY

H. G. WARD, ESQ.

HIS MAJESTY'S CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN THAT COUNTRY

DURING THE YEARS 1825, 1826, AND PART OF 1827.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1828.

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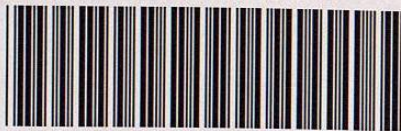
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PREFACE.

It is difficult for a person who is desirous to lay before the Public an impartial view of the present state and capabilities of Mexico, to determine exactly at what point to commence his undertaking.

Three years ago, nothing was questioned that could tend to enhance the opinion entertained of its resources. Now, the most cautious assertions are received with a smile, and facts, however well demonstrated, are hardly admitted to be such, if they militate against a preconceived opinion.

This state of things is, perhaps, the natural consequence of the advantage that was taken of the first removal of those barriers, which so long separated the Old World from the New, by men, some of whom were themselves enthusiasts, while many

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had no better object than to turn the enthusiasm of others to account. Both, unfortunately, concurred in exciting the imagination of the ignorant by pictures of a state of things, that could have no foundation in nature or truth.

Viewed through the medium of delusive hope, Spanish America presented nothing but prospects of unalloyed advantage. Great and instantaneous success was to attend every enterprise there, without the employment of those means, upon which the experience of the world has hitherto proved success to depend. Time, industry, perseverance, a knowledge of the scene upon which operations were to commence,—of the men by whom they were to be conducted,—of the language and peculiarities of the country, in which they were to be carried on; all these were stated to be considerations of minor importance; capital alone was represented as wanting; and facts, important in themselves, were so warped and distorted, in order to favour this theory, that when its fallacy was demonstrated, the facts fell to the ground with the superstructure which had been raised upon them.

Unexampled credulity amongst the disappointed, was succeeded by obstinate unbelief. Transatlantic

States and adventures were involved in one indiscriminate condemnation; and, even at the present day, enterprises of the greatest public utility are stigmatised as bubbles, because, during a period of unbridled speculation, bubbles may have been recommended by a similarity of form to the notice of the public.

It is possible, that on a closer examination of the subject, we may find that the expectations of 1824, and the despondency of 1828, originate in the same cause,—namely, a want of proper data for the regulation of our opinions; and it is the hope of being able to supply these data, with regard to one very interesting portion of the former dominions of Spain, that has induced me to undertake my present task.

If I have exceeded, in the execution of it, those bounds, within which works of an ephemeral nature, (and such all accounts of a new and rising country must be,) are usually confined, I must allege, as my excuse, the impossibility of assuming, amongst the generality of my readers, an acquaintance with any part of my subject, without rendering unintelligible what I have to communicate with regard to the rest.

So little attention has been hitherto paid to Ame-



rican affairs, that I generally find the vast territories now distributed amongst the New States, classed as provinces, or counties, belonging to one kingdom, and not as empires occupying half a world. I have been asked repeatedly, since my return to England, whether Captain Head's description of the Pampas is correct, although Mexico is nineteen degrees North, and Buenos Ayres thirty-four degrees South of the line; while men well read, and well informed upon every other subject, have expressed surprise that, after a residence of three years in the Capital of New Spain, I should not be intimately acquainted with the state of parties in Lima and Santiago, Bolivia and Bögötā.

Under these circumstances, I have conceived that it ought to be my object to combine as much information as possible in my present work, and thus to render it independent of those which have preceded it, by entering into details, a knowledge of which could not have been derived from other sources, without a perpetual and harassing reference to authorities, many of which are not within the reach of the public in general.

For instance, in addition to the *Essai Politique* of Baron Humboldt, to which I have expressed

my obligations in another place, I have drawn largely from the *Español*; whose eloquent author, Mr. Blanco White, has embodied not only the most curious collection of State-papers now extant, with regard to the period at which the tendency towards Independence first began to appear in the Spanish Colonies, but a mass of reflections upon American affairs, so moderate, so judicious, and so admirably adapted to the circumstances of the times, that, had his counsels been listened to by the contending parties, no small portion of the calamities which have since befallen them might have been averted.

I have likewise made free use, in my sketch of the Revolution, of the *Cuadro Historico* of Don Carlos Bustamante, as well as of Robinson, Brackenbridge, and a number of other works published in the United States, and but little read in England, from each of which I have taken whatever my own observations pointed out as correct.

The whole will, I think, be found to indicate with sufficient clearness the causes of the American Revolution; and these, again, are the best guarantee for its stability.

The subject is one of deep and universal interest;



for it is upon the duration of the new order of things that the prospects of the rising States depend. The Revolution has affected not only their political, but their commercial relations with the rest of the world; its influence has extended to their agriculture and mines, to both of which, after threatening them with total annihilation, it has given a fresh impulse, and opened a new and more extensive field. But liberty can alone repair the evils which the struggle for liberty has caused; and to ascertain the probability of its permanency is consequently a first step towards the consideration of its effects.

I have endeavoured to trace their operation in Mexico upon each branch of the great interests of the State, but more particularly upon the Mines: the importance of which, both to New Spain and to Europe, it has been one of my principal objects to develope.

As my views upon this subject differ materially from those generally entertained, I think it right to state, most distinctly and unreservedly, that the situation which I had the honour of filling in Mexico, rendered it impossible for me to take any other interest in the issue of the enterprises, by which

I was surrounded, than that which I could not but feel, in operations in which British capital to so large an amount is invested.

I never have possessed a single Mining share; yet, from circumstances stated in the body of my work, I have, perhaps, seen more of the mines of New Spain, and am in possession of more data, with regard to their former produce, than the majority of those, whose fortunes depend upon the result of the present attempt to work them by foreign capital.

With regard to my opinion of their present prospects, the public is now in possession of the data upon which it is formed, and may rectify any errors in which I may inadvertently have been betrayed.\* Convinced that publicity ought to be

\* Amongst these errors I should mention that, in the First Section of the Fourth Book, I may be thought to have challenged a principle of political economy, by alleging an increase in the rate of interest in Mexico as a proof of the diminution of the circulating medium; whereas it might be an indication only of the possibility of employing capital to greater advantage. The fact, however, is correct; for the chasm in the circulation, created by the remittance of the property of the Old Spaniards to Europe, was not filled up by the investments of foreigners, or by the produce of the mines; the two together not having furnished any thing like an equivalent for the amount of the specie withdrawn.



desired by all the Mining Companies, as the only security against those suspicions, by which their credit has been so frequently shaken, I have laid before the world, without reserve, the whole of the information now in my possession respecting them, together with my own observations upon the mode in which their affairs have been directed. The result will, I trust, be to produce an impression that these great undertakings have been, in many instances ably, in all, honestly conducted; that if errors have been committed, they are errors which it was extremely difficult to avoid; and that although the investments are large, the magnitude of the object, (demonstrated by records of a very recent date,) bears a fair proportion to the magnitude of the stake.

It now only remains for me to add, that the map annexed to the First Volume, though compiled from very incorrect data, (there being few even of the principal places in New Spain, the latitude and longitude of which have as yet been exactly fixed,) will be found to be of use in many essential points.

It gives the new territorial division of the country into States, with the names of the "Partidos,"

or districts, into which those States are divided; and it likewise rectifies many local errors, both in the Central and Northern Provinces; Colonel Bourne, a gentleman recently returned from Sonora and Cinaloa, having been so obliging as to furnish me with a great deal of valuable statistical information respecting those States.

In the Map of Routes, attached to the Second Volume, I have to express my obligations to Mr. Beaufoy, for the assistance, which he has afforded me, by furnishing me with a copy of his routes in the vicinity of the Capital, and from thence to Tampico and Veracruz. With the exception of the expedition to the South of Valladolid, we both passed over the same ground; but it will be seen that in my journey North, where I had nothing but my own remarks to guide me, I have been unable to enter into as many details as in my visits to the Central districts of Tlalpujahuá, Temascaltepec, and Real del Monte, where I had the benefit of Mr. Beaufoy's observations in addition to my own.

The distances are estimated in general by the reputed number of leagues, and time, combined.

The rivers are merely laid down where they in-



tersect the road, the course of most being little known.

The mountains are traced in a similar manner, nor is it attempted to connect the two great branches of the Sierra Madre, by filling up the intervening space, although their direction may be easily perceived.

The heights are taken from Humboldt, wherever he has given them, with the toises reduced to English feet; to which are added those of Real del Monte, the Doctor, Catorce, Zacatecas, and Bolaños, as measured by General Wavel, Captain Wilde, Mr. Glennie, and Dr. Coulter.

The drawings were all taken upon the spot; many of them under circumstances which would have discouraged most persons from making the attempt, as fatigue and a burning sun often combined to render it unpleasant. I mention this in justice to Mrs. Ward, whose name, in conformity to custom, appears upon the plates, for all of which I am indebted to her pencil.

With regard to the general tone of my work, which will be found to differ materially from that adopted in some recent publications, I shall make

no apology for this want of coincidence between my views and those of my predecessors. I have met with much kindness in Mexico, and should be sorry to think that this kindness emanated entirely from my public situation, which was an advantage only in as far as it brought me into more general and immediate contact with the natives. Upon this my opinions of their character are founded. To write either a satire upon human nature in general, or a criticism upon those peculiarities of manner, in which foreigners differ from ourselves, was not my object. The first I might have accomplished without leaving home; and had my happiness depended upon the second, I should have been a very miserable man during fourteen years of my life, nearly the whole of which I have passed abroad. I confess, therefore, that it has been my pleasure to dwell rather upon the good than the bad, and to separate the valuable parts of the national character from the scum and dross, which a long period of misrule, followed by the total dissolution of all social ties, could hardly fail to bring to the surface. If I have succeeded in this attempt, my reward will consist in



the gratification of thinking that the labours of the last six months may have some tendency to confirm that good understanding between Great Britain and Mexico, which, during the two preceding years, it was my anxious wish to promote.

## CONTENTS

OF

## THE FIRST VOLUME.

## BOOK I.

	Page.
SECTION I.	
Boundaries, Geological Structure, Climate . . . . .	3
SECTION II.	
Population . . . . .	26
SECTION III.	
Productions: Those necessary for the support of the Inhabitants, and those calculated for Exportation . . . . .	40
SECTION IV.	
Spanish Colonial System . . . . .	91

## BOOK II.

SECTION I.	
Effects produced by the Events of the year 1808 in the Peninsula . . . . .	123
SECTION II.	
Commencement of the Revolution in Mexico, from 1810 to the Death of Morelos . . . . .	150
SECTION III.	
Revolution from the Death of Morelos to 1820 . . . . .	211