A VOYAGE to CALIFORNIA, to observe the TRANSIT of VENUS. By Monsieur CHAPPE D'AUTEROCH. With an Historical Description of the Author's Route through MEXICO, and the natural History of that Province. Also a VOYAGE to NEWFOUNDLAND and SALEE, by Monsr. de CASSINI.

D'Auteroche gives the following description of the city of Mexico:

"WE arrived at Mexico on Easter Day, March 26, at noon. Before we entered the city, we met the marquis de la Torre, Inspector of infantry. The moment he saw us, he went and gave notice of our arrival to the viceroy, who sent orders that we should be suffered to enter the city without any search, and conducted to the house of the jefes, where a lodging was prepared for us. We had no sooner alighted there, but for some time, contrived to conduct us to the palace. I am at a loss for words to express the friendship and politeness shown by the marquis de Croix, viceroy of Mexico, and by his whole court. He left nothing undone to procure us whatever we wished for, and to make our stay at Mexico agreeable to us. We had no table but his own for the four days we continued in town, and he was so obliging as to send a cook to dress victuals for our attendants after the French fashion. The next day after our arrival, he sent us one of the coaches to go about the town.

Mexico, the capital of the province which bears that name, is situated on the banks of the lake, and built upon a crenelated wall of stone, with a multitude of canals, consequently the houses are all built upon piles. The ground gives way in many places, and many buildings are observed to have sunk upwards of six feet, without any visible alteration in the body of the building; one of the is the cathedral, which I shall speak of hereafter.

The streets of Mexico are very wide, perfectly straight, and almost all intersect each other at right angles. The houses are tolerably built, but not much ornamented either within or without; their make is the same as in Spain.

There is no very remarkable edifice at Mexico. The viceroy's palace is in a spacious and pretty regular square, with a fountain in the middle. The only merit of this palace is, that it is built very solid. No decorations are to be found there. Within its circumference are three handiome court-yards, with each a fountain in the middle. The mint stands behind this palace, and is a noble building. Upwards of forty men are constantly employed there in coining piastras for the king of Spain, out of the enormous maws of silver brought thither by the owners of the mines, who exchange them for coin. It is said, about 14 millions of piastras are struck yearly in this mint.

The most sumptuous buildings are the churches, chapels, and convents. There are a great many in this city, which are very richly ornamented, and among others the cathedral. The rail round the high altar is solid silver, and what is still more costly, there is a silver lamp, so copious that three men get in to clean it: this lamp is enriched with figures of lions' heads, and other ornaments of pure gold. The infinite pillars are hung with rich crimson velvet, enriched with a broad gold fringe. This profusion of riches in the churches at Mexico is not very surprising to whoever has seen the cathedral of Cadiz, and the immense treasuries contained in it. Gold and precious stones are there lavished upon the sacred vessels and ornaments; and the images of the holy Virgin and other saints are either solid silver, or clad in the richest garments.

The outside of the cathedral of Mexico is unfinished, and likely to continue so; they are afraid of the weight of the building, which already begins to sink as before. I shall say nothing of the other churches, I believe there as many as there are fairs in the calendar.

The city of Mexico contains three squares; the first is the Mayor or great square fronting the palace, the cathedral, and the marketplace, which is a double square surrounded with buildings: this square is in the center of the city. The second, adjoining to this, is the square called del Vallor, where the bull-fights are held. The third, is that of Santo Domingo. This square is not so large as the others, and each has a fountain in the middle. In the town, near the suburbs, is the public walk, Alameda. A rivulet runs all round it, and forms a pretty large square, with a baconf and jet d'eau in the middle. Eight walks, with each two rows of trees, terminate at this baconf like a star; but as the soil of Mexico is unfit for trees, they are not in a very thriving condition. This is the only walk in or near to Mexico; all the country about it is swampy, ground, and full of canals. A few paces off, and facing the Alameda, is the Quemadero; this is the place where they burn the Jews, and other unhappy victims of the awful tribunal of inquisition.

This Quemadero is an enclosure between four walls, and filled with ovens, into which are thrown, over the walls, the poor wretches who are condemned to be burnt alive; condemned, by judges profiting a religion whose first precept is charity.

The short stay we made at Mexico did not permit me to take a fuller survey of the place. I was told there was a Spanish playhouse, but I was not tempted to go. I had enough of one at home.

I found a Frenchman at Mexico who spoke the Spanish and Mexican languages tolerably well, and was perfectly acquainted with all this country, having lived in it many years. I took him for my interpreter, as I thought he would be very serviceable to me for the remainder of our journey, and especially in California. As we went further on, we were to meet with Indians more savage than before; the viceroy, therefore thought proper to give us a guard of three soldiers, to defend us against the robbers who infest those parts. Troops of fierce and unconquered Indians, called by the Spaniards Indians bravos, etc., they find themselves strong, murder them, or at least after stripping and tying them to the neighbouring trees, they carry off their mules and baggage to some eyrie, known to none but themselves, where they share the money, and hide the rest of the booty. Our guides told us, that some of the forests and mountains we passed by, conceal immense treasuries hoarded up by these banditti; they are easily known by a handkerchief which they hold between their teeth to hide their faces. When a traveller

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