

**TWENTY YEARS AMONG
THE MEXICANS:
A NARRATIVE OF
MISSIONARY LABOR**

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Twenty Years Among the Mexicans: A Narrative of Missionary Labor by Melinda Rankin

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MELINDA RANKIN

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MELINDA RANKIN.

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TO THE
Christian Women of the United States,
PARTICULARLY
THOSE WHO HAVE AIDED HER IN HER WORK IN MEXICO,
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY THE
AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE narrative is written, and I have concluded to give it to the public. It was commenced under very serious doubts as to the propriety of its publication, lest there might appear a spirit of egotism in arraying my imperfect labors before the world. In gathering up and writing out the actual facts of my personal experience, I have found much satisfaction. The review of the way in which the Lord has led me has greatly strengthened my faith in His providential dealings with His people, and confirmed my belief that He still accomplishes His divine purposes through weak instrumentalities. In view of this, I have arrived at the conclusion that the facts of my personal missionary experience are not my own, and therefore I have no right to suppress them, however much my natural disposition may incline me to do so. Hence, I give this brief narrative of my Twenty Years' Experience among the Mexicans, to the public, from a firm

conviction of duty to God, and will indulge the hope that He will make it useful to those into whose hands the little book may fall.

I am aware it will be subject to various criticisms. With some, it will, I doubt not, be received as an exhibition of God's faithfulness to His promises, and an example of His condescension in favoring one of his weakest servants. If this appreciation be arrived at, I shall be fully compensated for this presentation of my life-service for the Master.

There is another class who may probably deign to look into the book, and who, having no proper understanding of a work of faith, will pronounce the facts presented the result of a wild fanaticism and of a weak and misguided mind. From this class, I most frankly acknowledge, I have expected naught but disapprobation, therefore I shall not be disappointed in any criticisms they may see fit to make.

Then, there are those who profess to have an appreciation and knowledge of missionary labor who may say the work described might have been done better. To such, I would say, I wish you had come into the field at the stage of progress which I entered it, and accomplished the work as you think it ought to have been done. It is quite easy to

criticise the labors of predecessors, without due regard to the stupendous disadvantages under which they have labored, and because things have not been brought to a stage of perfection, to say there is an evident failure in their plans and purposes. It is a doubtful question, however, whether these critics could have done better under the same difficult circumstances.

Breaking up the ground and sowing the seed always precedes the harvest. The forest has to be leveled and much hard labor has to be accomplished before towns and cities can be built; and if some of my successors do not find the cities already built, they will at least find some degree of foundation upon which to build.

When I transferred the mission of Northern Mexico to the A. B. C. F. M., I claimed only that a FOUNDATION had been laid, and that the superstructure had yet to be reared. Although there were six organized churches, with some hundreds of converted Mexicans, and a school attached to each church, with a training school for boys in the seminary building in Monterey, also an abundance of precious seed scattered over the land, yet I presented the field as very needy and in great want of efficient laborers for *perfecting this work*, and for

fully carrying out the plans and purposes which had been laid in faith and prayer. May God enable those who take up this work to rightly understand it, and give due honor to the agencies which have preceded them.

The gathering of those churches has been done mainly through the instrumentality of native Christians. With the experience which they had gained of the gospel of Christ, they were enabled to reach the hearts of their fellow-countrymen with the same blessed truths far more successfully than any foreign missionary who might have been brought upon the field could have done. There are peculiarities of Mexican mind and character which foreigners fail to understand or reach. Many, *very many*, of the blinded votaries of the papacy in Mexico have been brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus through the instructions imparted them by these unlettered Bible readers. To undervalue and set at naught this heaven-approved instrumentality I can not but regard as a sin against the Holy Ghost. To those who lightly estimate these labors, I say, with tearful eyes, be careful in your judgment, lest the Master who called them into His service, and has so significantly accepted this service, be wounded in the house of his professed friends.