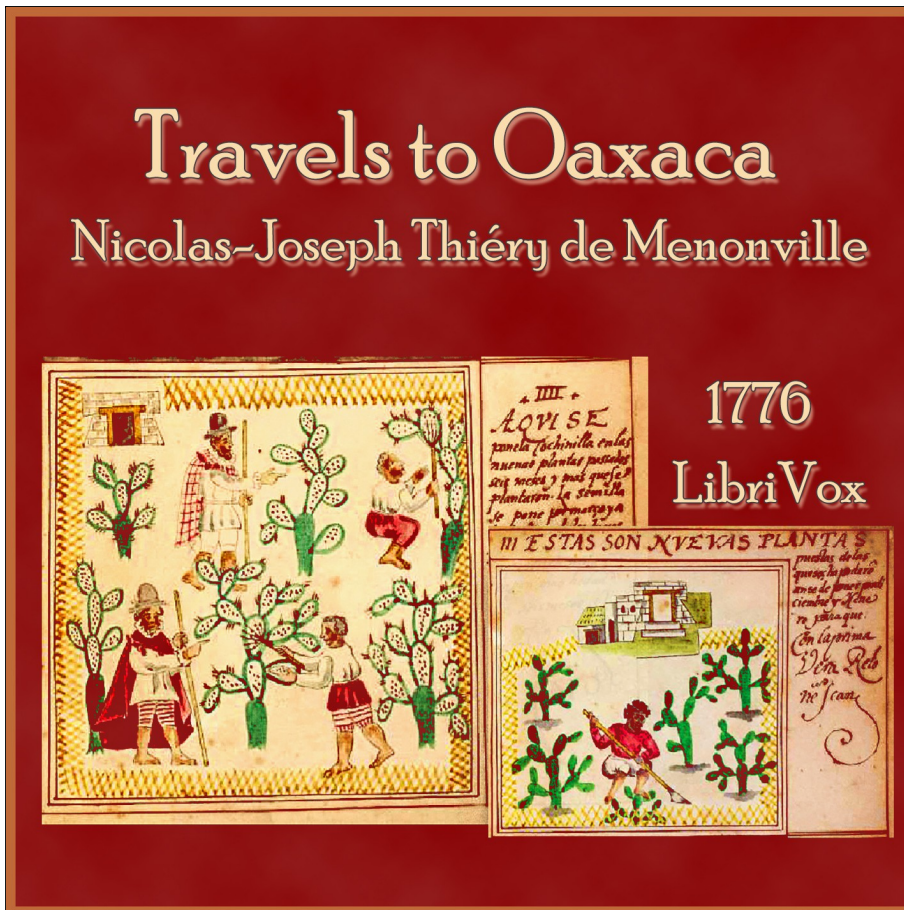


Travels to Oaxaca

Nicolas-Joseph Thiéry de Menonville



Travels to Oaxaca (1776-1777)

by Nicolas-Joseph Thiéry de Menonville (1739-1780)

Botanical piracy! A French botanist plots to steal red dye cochineal insects from Spanish Mexico and transplant them and their cacti hosts to the French Caribbean. The year is 1776. Nicolas-Joseph Thiéry de Menonville is a fast talker and a quick thinker. Botanist and physician by training, he insinuates his way from Port-au-Prince, first to Havana and then to the Mexican mainland on the ruse that he is searching for a botanical cure for gout. In Veracruz, however, his passport is confiscated, and the Viceroy orders him to leave Mexico on the first available ship. There are three weeks to wait before the ship sails. Thiéry de Menonville concocts a daring plan. Circulating the story that he is spending the interval before his departure at the country estate of an alluring widow, he instead climbs over the city wall of Veracruz in the dead of night and sets out on foot for Oaxaca and its cochineal plantations, no matter that he is ignorant of the exact route to take. Not daunted, he stops at a monastery and tells the monks he has made a vow to walk on foot to Nuestra Señora de la Soledad in Oaxaca, and the monks point him on the right road. How Thiéry de Menonville succeeds in bringing living cactus and cochineal insects to the French colony of Saint-Domingue is a non-stop adventure tale.

Read for LibriVox by Sue Anderson

Meta Coordinator: J. M. Smallheer; Book Coordinator: Sue Anderson
Dedicated Proof Listener: sidneyg Total running time 9:07:14

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