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MISSIONS
of
CALIFORNIA

ILLUSTRATED

MISSIONS OF CALIFORNIA



By Maj. Ben C. Truman

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Missions of California

BY MAJ. BEN. C. TRUMAN

THERE is a growing interest in the Missions of California—those first outposts of permanent civilization on the Pacific Coast between San Diego and San Francisco—and all those churches that were not permitted to go into decay after their secularization have undergone more or less repairs, and are now in a good state of preservation. The churches at San Luis Rey, San Juan Capistrano, San Gabriel, Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, Santa Clara and San Francisco have received marked attention from clubs and other bodies for the past two or three decadès, and a number of these may be said to rank higher than any of the other landmarks that meet the eye of the traveler in Florida, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Canada.

It has often been asserted that Americans as a class do not possess that reverence for the past that is characteristic of the nations of the old world, and this is often attributed to the fact that we have no antiquities, no ruins about which linger grand

and heroic memories; no historic race beginnings, as have other lands and older peoples, in whose realms the race was cradled.

The earlier past of this new world is largely enveloped in darkness, but occasionally evidences are discovered which prove conclusively that a long line of pre-historic peoples must have lived and vanished before the coming of the Europeans to our shores. The mighty ruins discovered in Mexico and in Central America are the hieroglyphics of dead nations; old, almost, perhaps, as those who were cradled in the Orient "in the beginning." But possibly some future Schliemann may yet uncover these buried monuments to unwritten history and help us to read and study the lives of the vanished races that have gone before us.

Meanwhile California has in her venerable old missions historic piles about which sufficient romance and historic story cling to make them worthy of preservation. They are monuments of energy, of courage, of religious fervor, and of an advancing

civilization that should not be left to perish. It is lamentable that the hungry tooth of decay had been permitted to gnaw at them so long undisturbed and unhindered. That the hide-bound roofs had been allowed to fall, and arch and wall to crumble into entire or partial ruin.

We can scarce understand today the amount of labor, the patient determination, the unwearying purpose that was necessary for the work accomplished. Here was a land occupied by the peaceful untaught children of the sun. They were not inured to toil. Game and fish and wild fruits furnished them food. They had few if any implements of labor. Their own patient backs took the place of beasts of burden. The mighty mountain paths were climbed for stone and for timber. In the sun were the brown bricks baked, and toiling thousands of the native sons of the soil worked to rear these century-old structures, which stand today as the monuments, not alone of ritual and creed; they represent *more* than this: They represent the birth in the mind of the simple-hearted savage of an idea—the idea of a God who loved the race; and who, through sacrifice, had opened the door to larger life and nobler worship.

The simple, pastoral life about these old missions gradually took on more and more of the life of civilization. Orchards

and vineyards were planted; and the fresh, virgin soil was turned and made ready for the seed time and the later harvests. Cattle and horses and sheep began to feed in great numbers on the lush grasses about the old missions; great aqueducts were built and life-giving streams were brought down from the mountain fastnesses; the melody of the mission bells broke the sweet, fragrant silence of the blossoming hills and plains. The children were gathered together to be taught; and here, where these missions stand, the early lessons of civilization were learned. Reading, writing, music and the silver-tongued Spanish were taught, and slowly budded the latent intelligence of these simple natives.

It is this mental dawn that these old missions commemorate. They are eloquent of the new life that then was planted on these shores. They are the monuments of energy, of patience, of self-sacrifice and devotion, and as such should be dear to every heart within the limits of this great commonwealth. It is not too boastful to say that we revere these venerable piles and would preserve them as landmarks reared by the brave pioneers of a new era of progress upon these shores. They represent an energy as forceful, a courage as unfaltering, a devotion as true as that manifested by the Puritan fathers upon the bleak

and inhospitable shores of New England; and here, now, at their shrine, do the forces of these two distinct civilizations meet and clasp hands in one common love of country. And we owe it to the past, to the brave, heroic conquering force of these old padres that these missions be preserved. Their bells, calling to worship, may be partially hushed, and the paths once trodden by thousands of the brown children of early days may become partially obliterated by orchards, towns, cities, railways and factories; but we shall never fail to reap the benefits arising from that mighty onslaught upon superstition, and the victory commemorated by the hoary walls of these crumbling missions. They tell the story of the past as nothing else can tell it today, and account for their restoration and preservation.

The writer of this sketch first visited these missions in 1867 and spent three months in them from San Diego to Sonoma; and he has visited many of them numbers of times since—his last visit being in 1890, when he saw for himself that nearly all of the churches in Southern California had received substantial repairs and other preserving touches. At the present time some of these old churches are visited by tens of thousands of tourists annually, conspicuously Santa Barbara, San Gabriel, San Luis

Rey, Carmel and San Juan Capistrano, which are accessible by steam cars and electrics or afoot.

It is now 134 years, on the 15th of May, 1903, since Juan Crespi, a friar of the order of St. Francis, accompanied by twenty-six soldiers, three packers and four or five Indian servants, arrived at San Diego, Cal., with the purpose of establishing a permanent mission, converting the savages, and introducing the arts of civilization—and those purposes were not only solemnly and religiously, but commercially and successfully, carried out. The settlement was permanent, but it was not made so without the encountering of disturbing elements, and in two or three cases loss of life was involved. Padre Juan Crespi's name as founder, however, gives way historically to Padre Junipero Serra, who arrived at San Diego July 1st, 1769, and who at once formally founded the first mission in California at what is now known as San Diego, where the padre wrote—in a record which I once saw in the possession of the presiding priest, in February, 1867—"it was maintained for five years, and various buildings were erected with more labor than benefit to the mission, all of them having been afterwards appropriated to the use of the garrison," etc.

As I have stated, this mission was permanent, and others

soon followed, until nearly all of the great valleys bordering on the Pacific, where there were harbors or roadsteads, were marked by mission churches and commercial structures from San Diego to San Francisco; and New California, as it was then called, took its place as one of the occupied provinces of the Spanish Empire. Since then the remote, poor, insignificant, thinly-settled and almost unknown province has become rich, influential and populous, and is today one of the most noted states in the American aggregation, its prodigality of soil and its equability of temperature (west of the Sierra Nevada Mountains) being unsurpassed by any other section of country in the world, although these pioneers had not, of course, the remotest conception of the superstructure that was to arise majestically on their unpretentious foundation.

Spain was then, in their eyes, the greatest of all nations. To be sure they were not unmindful of the fact that England was mistress of the seas; that she had taken Canada and India from the French, and that the American colonies were rapidly gaining in population and wealth; but they did not dream of what would occur in a hundred years, nor did it enter their minds that the Anglo-Saxon colonists upon the Atlantic coast would in less than a hundred years become one of the great powers among

nations, make California part of a magnificent republic, and sweep almost entirely out of existence the unfortunate aborigines for whom the missions were at first, ostensibly or otherwise, founded. Undoubtedly there were sanguine thinkers and dreamers among the Atlantic colonists who foresaw achievements of art and science, expansion of territory, growth of population and greatness of political power; but lived there a man whose keenest foresight, stimulated by the wildest enthusiasm, could have predicted at the time Padre Crespi landed at San Diego, the inventions of the steam boat and the steam car, the cotton gin and the McCormick reaper, the wonderful developments of commerce and manufactures, the opening of gold and silver mines in California and Australia, in Liberia and Nevada, and the establishment of the independence of the Spanish colonies in North and South America?—all of which, while they contributed to strengthen many nations, weakened Spain and united the Americans in becoming masters of Upper California, which became so important that, after the gold discovery, it was the only California to which people paid any attention; and the country to which the name was originally applied was called, for the sake of distinction, "Lower California."

The Jesuits were banished from Mexico in June, 1767, and

the King gave orders that the Jesuit mission in Lower California should not be abandoned, but should be placed in charge of Franciscan friars, who were, next to the Jesuits, the most active and zealous missionaries in New Spain (Mexico). The King expressed a desire, also, that new missions should be established further north. In the latter part of 1768, therefore, friars, soldiers, supplies and means of transportation were collected for the new missions, and four parties were sent out from Lower California. A little brig called the San Carlos sailed from La Paz on the 9th of January, 1769, and reached the bay of San Diego on the 1st of May, and a similar craft named the San Antonio sailed from Cape St. Lucas on the 15th of February and arrived on the 11th of April. Both vessels experienced long voyages and lost many men by scurvy, and their masters were so much discouraged by the shortness of supplies and the seeming failure of the land expeditions to reach their point of destination that they were about to sail away, when Father Crespi, who had left La Paz by land on the 26th of February, came in sight on the 14th of May, and Junipero Serra, the President of the missionary enterprise, arrived at San Diego in about six weeks thereafter from Loretta, having departed on the first of April, the trip taking three months and one day.

The only original record accessible of the first settlement of California is that briefly presented in the life of Junipero Serra, by his friend and for some time colleague, Francisco Palou, who wrote it at the mission of San Francisco in 1785; but this biographer, whose attention was fixed chiefly on the pious labors and seraphic character of his hero, leaves the searcher of these curious-looking old volumes of worn-out Spanish manuscript in almost complete ignorance of many of the particulars of the adventures by land and sea, and of the conduct of the Indians upon the first appearance of the missionaries.

Crespi was in the habit of keeping diaries whenever he traveled, and several copies of them are now in possession of the Catholic priests in charge of those missions that have not entirely crumbled into decay; but none have been properly preserved in the State or Church archives of California. When the Franciscan friars were directly or indirectly driven away, many of their records were purposely destroyed, numbers were neglected, while others were carried away by departing missionaries, and it would be a difficult matter to find a bit of manuscript of Crespi or Serra. Once, while in the City of Mexico, I saw copies of a number of their journals, and Father Ybach, when I first visited San Diego thirty-six years ago, showed me

the portion I have quoted in Serra's handwriting. But I have been informed that the original journals of Crespi, Serra, Jimine, Sanchez, and Salvidea, and other early friars may be found in the convent of San Fernando (Mexico) and also at the Franciscan convent, in the city of Palma, on the island of Majorca; but these journals and other companion papers are in great confusion.

There is one thing certain: Serra and his brother friars did their work well, as they understood it, and their missions continued to gain in converts, herds of cattle, horses and sheep and wealth for forty-five years, after which, under the influence of the Mexican rebellion, they declined, until, at last, in 1835, after an existence of sixty-six years, they were secularized, the property was placed in the hands of civil officers, and the friars were deprived of power to control. And thus ended in California a great system of combination of commerce and agriculture and religion, the result of which, whatever good may have been derived therefrom, was to leave the Indians in a worse state than that in which they were found by the missionaries, as they soon afterward abandoned their habits of regular industry and began to die off very rapidly, until there are not now two thousand of the ten times that number sixty-odd years

ago left, and most of these at present live away from the whites in a condition little better than that of the coyote.

There were twenty-one missions founded in all, the first and most southern at San Diego, in 1769, as heretofore mentioned, and the last and most northern at Sonoma, in 1823. None was more than thirty miles from the ocean, while most of them were nearer. The mission at San Francisco was founded in 1776, and that at Monterey in 1770, one year after Padre Crespi and Serra landed at San Diego. These missions were in their best condition in 1814, although in 1826 they had 400,000 cattle, 200,000 sheep, and 20,000 horses. They also kept at work 15,000 Indians and harvested nearly 100,000 bushels of grain of various kinds.

For seventy years these missions constituted a paradise, not only for the missionaries and their troops, but for the Indians, who, while they were compelled to work from ten to sixteen hours a day, were well enough fed and clothed, philanthropically cared for, and treated to horse racing, bear baiting, bull fighting and cock fighting Sunday afternoons.

Some thirty-five years ago I spent a night with Father Mut, at the Mission of San Juan Capistrano, and he furnished me from among a drawer full of fugitive papers the following statistics showing the conditions of the missions in December, 1831:

Names of Missions.	Bap- tisms.	Mar- riages.	Deaths.	Number Remain- ing.
San Diego	6,461	1,767	4,210	1,506
San Luis Rey	5,298	1,301	2,586	2,819
San Juan Capistrano	4,303	1,149	3,064	939
San Gabriel	7,709	1,877	5,494	1,398
San Fernando	2,768	1,813	1,938	811
San Buenaventura	3,857	1,086	3,098	703
Santa Barbara	5,483	1,467	3,874	679
Santa Ynez	1,336	390	1,190	388
Purissima Concepcion	3,245	1,011	2,583	404
San Luis Obispo	2,640	758	2,230	265
San Miguel	2,459	751	1,836	679
San Antonio Padua	4,402	1,139	3,579	661
Nuestro Senora de la Soledad	2,102	636	1,679	336
San Carlos	3,769	1,018	2,803	209
San Juan Bautista	3,947	993	2,781	928
Santa Cruz	2,423	820	1,946	298
Santa Clara	8,475	2,472	6,724	1,184
San Jose	6,637	1,943	4,645	1,886
N. P. San Francisco	6,883	2,040	5,089	210
San Rafael	1,795	541	616	1,073
San Francisco Solano	881	220	430	939
Total	88,873	24,692	63,281	18,315

The following is a list of the Missions founded, with the dates of establishment:

San Diego, July 16, 1769.

San Carlos de Monterey, June 3, 1770.

San Antonio de Padua, July 14, 1771.

San Gabriel, September 8, 1771.

San Luis Obispo, September 1, 1772.

San Francisco de los Dolores, October 9, 1776.

San Juan Capistrano, November 1, 1776.

Santa Clara, January 12, 1777.

San Buenaventura, March 31, 1782.

Santa Barbara, December 4, 1786.

La Purissima Concepcion, December 8, 1796.

Santa Cruz, August 5, 1791.

Nuestro Senora de la Soledad, October 9, 1781.

San Jose, June 11, 1797.

San Miguel, July 25, 1798.

San Fernando Rey, September 8, 1797.

San Luis Rey, June 13, 1797.

Santa Ynez, Virgin Y Martyr, September 15, 1804.

San Rafael, December 14, 1817.

San Francisco de Solano de Sonoma, April 25, 1820.

Besides the building of shops for the manufacture of shoes and hats and woolen clothes, soaps and syrups, etc., the mission fathers set out fruit trees and grape cuttings and planted vegetables and flowers. The Jesuits had gardens in Baja (Lower) California as early as 1699, and vineyards and orchards a few years later. The Franciscans of Alta (Upper) California began to cultivate the soil as soon as they arrived. The first grape vines were brought from Lower California in 1769, and were soon planted at nearly all of the missions. Before the year 1800 the orchards at the missions contained apples, pears, peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, figs, olives, oranges and pomegranates. At San Diego and San Buenaventura (then in Santa Barbara County), thirty miles down the coast from Santa Barbara city, there were also sugar canes, date palms, plantains, bananas and citrons. There are pear and olive trees more than a hundred years old at Ventura, San Diego, San Gabriel, Santa Clara and San Fernando, and orange trees quite a hundred years old at San Gabriel. They also had running water over all their gardens and orchards—and sometimes fountains—brought from the rivers and mountain springs from ten to twenty miles away.

Something is being done continually in the way of interior and exterior preservation; and even the ruins of dormitories,

fountains, aqueducts, arches, etc., are being patched up or otherwise renovated and strengthened. Services are also held Sundays and other holy days by resident and circuit priests; and as nearly all the original bells have remained in their places, their silvery notes vociferate the same dulcet sounds as have pierced the air daily for more than a hundred years.

The best preserved and noblest structure of all is the old church at Santa Barbara, 100 miles from Los Angeles, and reached twice a day by the Southern Pacific Railroad either from San Francisco or Los Angeles. This old church will compare not unfavorably with Avila and St. Sebastian. It is 200 feet long, 40 wide and has a wing of 100 feet. It has two high stone towers, and is built on a light elevation just far enough away from the pretty town to give it majestic exclusiveness. Its bells came from mediaeval Spain, and are composed of equal parts of copper and silver taken from Mexico. For more than a hundred years these sweet sounding bells have mingled their morning melodies with those of the linnnet and the thrush, and a combination of exquisite diminuendoes have gone murmuring through orchards that equal those of Sorrento, and out upon an ocean or channel as beautiful as the Mediterranean Sea. All around are unrivalled hillsides and sequestered sweeps of low-

lands interlaced with vineyards and groves of all varieties of nuts and semi-tropical fruits. There is a bewitching jumble of adobe, Castilian and Queen Anne in the architecture of Santa Barbara, and an *olla podrida* of ocean, forest, mountain and plain.

Fountains play in front of the main entrance of the old church and there are gardens in which may be seen the orange, the olive, the pomegranate, and the fig. The friars and their cats and their mocking birds fraternize with each other serenely and the former are undoubtedly happier than all the millionaires upon the globe. They have all they want that is good to eat and drink; they teach the young Santa Barbara idea properly to shoot, and they lead a temperate, moderate, harmless life, doing all the good they can in their way, and hoping for a reward hereafter.

Next to the church at Santa Barbara in many respects is that of San Gabriel, which is visited by more people annually than all the others. It is only nine miles from Los Angeles and three from Pasadena, and is reached by the Southern Pacific Railroad and the electric railway, by carriage and by other methods. Several thousand dollars have been lately spent in renovating and preserving the San Gabriel church, and the result is that a handsome change has been effected without dis-

turbing any of the features that have made it a recognized landmark for more than a century.

One of the most impressive scenes of all is Capistrano, the site of the ruins and partial renovation of the old church of San Juan Capistrano, whose imperfectly built tower toppled over one Sunday in 1812 and killed a hundred people. This place is reached by the Santa Fe Railroad twice daily, and is about two hours' run from Los Angeles. Here may be seen a majestic ruin—big arches, and much else that tells of a delicious past. Through the perseverance of the late K. H. Wade, a station was built in 1894 at Capistrano possessing much of the flavor of the old church and its environments.

Standing upon the platform of this new guidepost of progress and civilization, the air impregnated with the breath of flower and shrub, my mind goes back a century or more, when upon this very ground Father Salvidea took his evening rambles, violin in hand, scraping out some ancient melody. I can see that old Christian standard bearer, in my mind's eye, cadaverous looking and illy clad, bending over some new dogma of sacred ceremonial, his only hope or ambition being, outside of saving sluggish souls, to some day kiss the stone that contains the footprints of the holy Nazarene when he met St. Peter on the Appian way,

or touch the steps of the mansion of Pilate down which the suffering Savior descended after judgment.

Off from the railroad a few miles are some other missions that are worth going out of one's way to see, particularly that of San Luis Rey, half way between Capistrano and San Diego, one of the last built and the most pretentious of all.

Carmel Mission, about nine miles from the Hotel del Monte, in Monterey County, is well worth going a good distance to see. That at San Luis Obispo, also, is well worth visiting. It has

been well cared for from the first and has a smack of Doric in its architecture. But for the sake of those who cannot perhaps visit this seven-hundred-mile stretch of old churches—this pioneer cordon of California's first civilizing influences—the pictures that follow are faithful delineations, nearly all of which are actual photographic reproductions, and will commend themselves to all who have an artistic eye and a love for the beautiful, the historical, the religious and the sympathetic.



HOW TO REACH THE MISSIONS

SAN DIEGO. Drive from San Diego, six miles. Go out by way of old San Diego, return on the Bluff Road.

SAN LUIS REY. Go to Oceanside, Santa Fe line Los Angeles to San Diego. Drive four miles. Livery stable at Oceanside or on regular mail stage.

PALA MISSION. Drive from Oceanside, 24 miles, passing San Luis Rey on the way.

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO. Within stone's throw of station of Capistrano on Santa Fe line between Los Angeles and San Diego.

SAN GABRIEL. Drive from Los Angeles, seven miles, or main line Southern Pacific Railway, or Pacific Electric cars from Los Angeles.

SAN FERNANDO. Drive half mile from Fernando on Southern Pacific, 21 miles north of Los Angeles.

SAN BUENAVENTURA. Town of Ventura on Coast Line Southern Pacific, 83 miles from Los Angeles. Street cars from Southern Pacific station to door.

SANTA BARBARA. On Coast Line, Southern Pacific Railway. Street cars, about two miles, or drive.

PURISIMA CONCEPCION and OLD PURISIMA CONCEPCION. The latter is at outskirts of Lompoc, nearly all gone, and the later building is three miles East. Lompoc is reached by spur railway from Surf on Main Coast Line, Southern Pacific. Drive from Lompoc to both Missions.

SANTA INEZ. Stage from Santa Barbara, 30 miles. Mission

is three miles west of Village of Santa Inez. Eight miles south of Los Olivos Station on Pacific Coast Railway (Narrow-gauge.)

SAN LUIS OBISPO. Station same name, Coast Line, Southern Pacific.

SANTA MARGARITA CHAPEL. Half mile west from station of same name, Southern Pacific, Coast Line.

SAN MIGUEL. Trains of Southern Pacific, Coast Line, pass before door.

SAN ANTONIO. Leave Southern Pacific, Coast Line, at King City. Drive twelve miles west.

SOLEDAD. Three miles drive from station of same name on Southern Pacific, Coast Line.

SAN CARLOS. The old church is in the town of Monterey (Southern Pacific Coast Line). The Church in which Padre Serra lies buried is generally called Carmel Mission, and is in Carmel Valley, a drive of about six miles from Monterey.

SAN JUAN BAUTISTA. Stage from Sargents, Southern Pacific, Coast Line.

SAN JOSE. A mile and a half drive from Irvington, on Niles branch of Southern Pacific.

SANTA CLARA. In the city of Santa Clara, four miles from San Jose. Reached by Narrow-gauge, Southern Pacific from San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO DE ASIS. In the city of San Francisco, three miles from Palace Hotel. Reached by street cars, etc.



ALTAR OF MISSION SAN LUIS REY.



PALA MISSION.



RUINS OF SAN DIEGO MISSION.



MISSION SANTA BARBARA.



CORRIDORS OF MISSION SAN FERNANDO REY.



MISSION LA PURISIMA CONCEPCION.



SAN CARLOS BORROMEO MISSION (RESTORED).



RUINS OF VIAJO MISSION AT LOMPOC.



MISSION SAN GABRIEL.



MISSION SAN JUAN



Ramsay
629 1/2
So. B. St.
Los Angeles.

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO.



MISSION SAN JUAN BAUTISTA.



MISSION SANTA CRUZ.



MISSION OF SAN BUENAVENTURA.



BELLS AT SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO.



MISSION SAN LUIS OBISPO DE TOLOSA.



MISSION OF SAN FRANCISCO DE ASIS.



MISSION SANTA CLARA.



MISSION SANTA BARBARA.



MGR. FALCONIO IN THE SANTA BARBARA MISSION COURT



MISSION SAN LUIS REY.



MISSION SAN JOSE.



MISSION SAN MIGUEL.



MISSION BELLS AND CROSS AT BRUSH CHURCH, SANTA YSABEL. (Copyright by C. C. Pierce & Co.)



MISSION OF SANTA YNEZ.



RUINED ARCHES OF SAN LUIS REY.



THE GARDEN OF SANTA BARBARA MISSION.



MISSION OUR LADY OF SOLITUDE.



MISSION SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA.



MISSION OF SAN FERNANDO REY.



MISSION SAN FRANCISCO DE SOLANO.



BELL TOWER OF MISSION SAN GABRIEL.



Courtesy of C. C. Pierce

AT THE FORGE—SANTA BARBARA MISSION.



MISSION NUESTRO SENORA DE LA SOLEDAD.

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