

**THE STORY OF THE OLD
MISSIONS OF CALIFORNIA:
THEIR ESTABLISHMENT,
PROGRESS AND DECAY**

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The Story of the Old Missions of California: Their Establishment, Progress and Decay by Laura
Bride Powers

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THE PALMS OF SAN FERNANDO REY.

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LAURA BRIDE POWERS

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WM. DOXEY
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Dedication.

*To her whose gentle hand has
guided me through the vale
of my childhood; whose loving
heart has shared the joys and
sorrows of my riper years—to
her,*

My Mother,

*is this volume most tenderly
dedicated.*

1896

THE ANGELUS.

Heard at the Mission Dolores, San Francisco, 1868.

*Bells of the past, whose long-forgotten music
Still fills the wide expanse,
Tingeing the sober twilight of the present
With color of romance.*

*I hear your call, and see the sun descending
On rock, and wave, and sand,
As down the coast the mission voices blending
Girdle the heathen land.*

*Within the circle of their incantation
No blight nor mildew falls;
Nor fierce unrest, nor lust, nor low ambition
Passes those airy walls.*

*Borne on the swell of your long waves receding,
I touch the further Past—
I see the dying glow of Spanish glory,
The sunset dream and last!*

*Before me rise the dome-shaped mission towers,
The white presidio;
The swart commander in his leathern jerkin,
The priest in stole of snow.*

*Once more I see Fortold's cross uplifting
Above the setting sun;
And past the headland, northward, slowly drifting,
The freighted galleon.*

*O solemn bells! whose consecrated masses
Recall the faith of old—
O tinkling bells! that lulled with twilight music
The spiritual fold—*

*Your voices break and falter in the darkness—
Break, falter, and are still;
And veiled and mystic, like the Host descending,
The sun sinks from the hill!*

—F. BRET HART.

PREFACE.

THIS little volume might well have gone forth to its destiny, known as "A Plea for the Missions." That interest might be aroused in behalf of these decaying heirlooms ere it becomes too late, I have endeavored to tell their tale of ascendancy and ruin, hoping thereby to enlist sympathy in the cause of their restoration and preservation.

With this object in view, I have gathered such information as years of research have woven together—information obtained from that most reliable of sources—manuscripts—including diaries, mission registers, and personal letters.

We are constantly reminded by our European cousins of the woeful absence of ruins or antiquities in America. Now, let us Californians establish our claims to those evidences of stability by preserving our mission ruins from further disinte-

gration. Let us act ere the hour of action is past, and thrust aside the destroying hand of Time from the landmarks in the history of our State. They should live—they must live, not only in memories and histories, but in proud reality.

L. B. P.

San Francisco, June 1, 1893.