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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LAURA BRIDE POWERS

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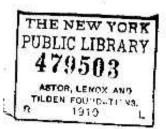
OLD MISSIONS OF CALIFORNIA

THEIR ESTABLISHMENT, PROGRESS AND DECAY

Laura Bride Powers

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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.



THE ANGELUS.

Heard at the Mission Dolores, San Francisco, 1868.

Bells of the past, whose long-forgoiten music Still fills the wide expanse, Tingging the sober twitight 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 incontation

No blight nor mildew falls;

Nor fierce unrest, nor tust, nor low ambilian.

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 sauset dream and last!

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

Once more I see Portold'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 fulled with twilight music

The spiritual fold—

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

—F. Bret Harte.

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 ascendency 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 disintegration. 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.