THE KING'S HIGHWAY: A ROMANCE OF THE FRANCISCAN ORDER IN ALTA CALIFORNIA

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The King's Highway: A Romance of the Franciscan Order in Alta California by Madeline Deaderick Willard

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By MADELINE DEADERICK WILLARD

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CONTENTS

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Chapter.	Page.
I.	THE COMING OF DON MIGUEL 7
II.	THE GREATER PASSION 17
III.	LA PURISIMA 28
IV.	THE CHAMPION OF THE PADRE 48
v.	ARMS AND A MAN 57
VI.	THE HEART OF MIGUEL 72
VII.	THE WAY OF ALL THE EARTH 77
VIII.	ASHES OF ROSES 89
IX.	THE KING'S HIGHWAY 98
X	RAFAELA MONTIJO106
XI.	LA ENCINA
XII.	SPOTTED LILIES AND WHITE126
хпі.	THE HEM OF HER GARMENT138
XIV.	THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS150
XV.	HOLY ORDERS
XVI.	A DREAM OF OLD SPAIN173
XVII.	THE CLOISTER GATE188

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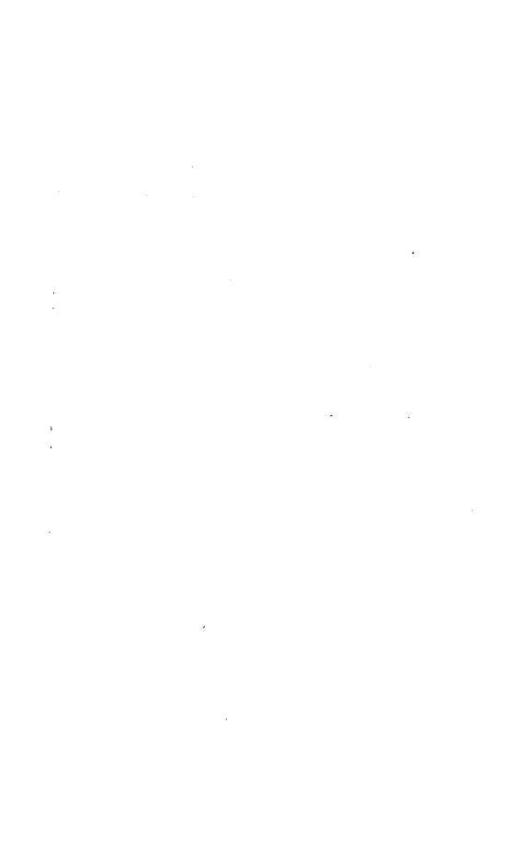




Photo by H. E. Roberta
The Ruined Church of Juan Capistrano To day

The King's Kighway

CHAPTER I

The Coming of Don Miguel

Our Lord 1806, Don Miguel first came to San Juan Capistrano, and the miracle of his coming was so great that for years it rivalled in popularity the stories of the saints and the outlaws. For where there is not only a miracle, but a mystery also, the thing is not forgotten soon. And so it was with Don Miguel, for the story of his coming reads like a page from some old romance.

September was always a glorious month in Alta California, and in the year 1806, the saints had not decreed otherwise. Over sleepy San Juan valley drifted a faint, gold mist that blended the kaleidoscopic colors of tawny hills, blue sea-water and green meadows into a delicious maze like the tones in a cathedral window. Across the green floor of the upper valley mottled sycamores trailed like slim, gray snakes, the yellow glory of their fallen leaves below them. Farther down