

in holy orders; and of this time, thirty-five years, four months, and thirteen days, in the office of apostolic missionary; in which time, he performed the glorious actions which we have seen; having lived in continual activity, occupied in virtuous and holy exercises, and in singular prowesses; all directed to the greater glory of God, and the salvation of souls."

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CHAP. II.

RECENT HISTORY OF UPPER CALIFORNIA.—PRESENT POLITICAL CONDITION AND PROSPECTS.

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California Pious Fund. This fund was managed by the Convent of San Fernando and other trustees in Mexico, and the proceeds regularly remitted annually to California, as also the salaries assigned to the missionaries by the king. The government likewise sent soldiers to protect them from the attack of the wild Indians and foreign enemies.

Under this state of things the missions greatly prospered. They went on augmenting their possessions, increasing their stock of domestic animals, and the number of converted Indians, until they had absorbed nearly the whole of the valuable lands, to the almost total exclusion of free white settlers. No one could possess land except by a grant from the missionaries, who on all occasions were very reserved in conceding such grants; and few colonists were to be found, except the officers of the troops, the soldiers, and their followers. Great care was taken, that the soldiers should not leave too many descendants to the supposed prejudice of the missionary plan; and as no officer or soldier in his Catholic Majesty's service can marry without his special licence, it could easily be managed that as many marriages were permitted as was desired, and no more. This fully accounts for the very scanty number of free colonists that exists in California.

In Upper as in Lower California the missionary establishments were acknowledged to be the great

objects for which the country was settled and maintained; and they existed in an almost complete state of independence of the Mexican government. Still the country belonged to Spain, and all the ordinary government establishments were kept up in it, although to a much smaller extent than in the other provinces of the Vice-royalty of New Spain. The general commandant of all the troops in the country was also governor of all places and persons not under the immediate authority of the Fathers. He resided at Monterey, and had a salary of four thousand dollars. He could not interfere with the affairs of the missions, but was obliged to grant them assistance when they claimed it.

The antient system remained in full force until the period of the revolution in Mexico and the separation of all the Americas from Spain. At that time Upper California was formed into what is called a territory, and Lower California into another, on the ground of their respective population not amounting to the number entitling them to be federative states; these being established on the basis of population.

The territories are not entitled to have governors or legislatures, but are allowed to send one member to the general congress. This member is entitled to sit and take a part in discussions, but has no vote. The territories are, from their being deprived of governors or legislatures, subject to the

immediate government and legislation of the general government in Mexico. This reduced Upper California to be directed by an agent of the government, who resided there under the denomination of commandant general. This state of things California has not as yet had much cause to lament; for until wiser legislation is adopted, and greater harmony exists between the general government and the different state legislatures, it is no great misfortune to be deprived of the labours of a provincial popular assembly.

The two Californias send each a member to the general congress, elected by popular suffrage. The first deputy elected for Upper California was a captain of the Californian troops, and a Spaniard by birth; but on his arrival at San Blas he found a law had been passed excluding natives of Spain from congress, and he was obliged to return. A lieutenant was then elected to succeed him who proceeded to the city of Mexico where he died. A serjeant of the same corps was next elected, who served out his term of two years in the Mexican congress, and then returned to his native country: this retrogression in the rank of the honorable members is rather singular.

When an enlightened man shall govern this distant and thinly peopled country, it must be much better regulated than if it were domineered over and

plundered by a set of ill-informed and rapacious men, united into a democratic council, and daily manufacturing absurd laws and regulations which, after a very short time, are laid aside for some fresh whim, as a child throws away its play-thing at the sight of a new one. It is true that even in the territories there is some semblance of a local government, for they have what is called a deputation, which is a sort of privy council, more for the purpose of advising with the commandant, than of originating any thing of themselves; their powers are consequently very limited and their reunion takes place but very seldom.

When visited in 1826 and 1827 by Captain Beechey, the missions had begun to feel the effect of the recent changes in the government of Mexico. At this time there had arrived orders to liberate all the Indians "who had good characters and were supposed able to maintain themselves from having been taught the art of agriculture or some trade." They were directed to have portions of land given to them for their maintenance and the district to be divided into parishes, with curates provided for each. At the same time, the missionaries' salaries, formerly paid by government (400 dollars per annum) were suspended, the country being expected to support its own establishment. Considering the utterly helpless and enslaved state of the Indians, which

we shall describe more fully by and bye, it is not to be supposed that a system of legislation of this sort, however philanthropic in appearance, could really answer the intended object. Accordingly when captain Beechey returned in the following year (Nov. 1827) he found that the new project had failed, and matters were in some degree restored to their former state. In consequence of the strong remonstrances of the Fathers, the governor had modified the orders received from Mexico and agreed to make the experiment on a small scale. "After a few months trial (says captain Beechey) he found that these people, who had always been accustomed to the care and discipline of school-boys, finding themselves their own masters, indulged freely in those excesses which it had been the endeavours of their tutors to repress, and that many having gambled away their clothes, implements and even their land, were compelled to beg or to plunder; in order to support life. They at length became so obnoxious to the peaceable inhabitants, that the padres were requested to take some of them back to the missions, while others who had been guilty of misdemeanors, were loaded with shackles and put to hard work, and when we arrived were employed in transporting enormous stones to the beach to improve the landing place."* This unfor-

Voyage to the Pacific. Vol. ii. page 320.

unate result was taken advantage of by the Fathers, and their remonstrances procured not only the restoration of their salaries but a promise of payment of the arrears, they consenting to be submissive to the new government.

Since this time various contradictory laws have been passed respecting this country, and projects for its government and improvement, equally contradictory set on foot: yet it is true that no change of government or of system has been able materially to alter the original Franciscan dispensation, which may still be said to exist in all its primitive purity. The great source of the property of the missions is, however, now, I believe, effectually dried up: viz. their supplies from Mexico; for although the natives of Spain and their descendants inhabiting Mexico, retained their religious zeal for conquering infidels and converting heathens, longer, and in greater force, than the other European Christians, yet the American revolutions swept this, together with the inquisition and many other equally venerable customs, entirely away; and the modern Republicans want money too much at home to think of sending any to so remote a place as California; so that the *Pious Fund of California*, like most other funds that could be made available, has been put to less pious uses. But the value of the estates of the missions has so much increased, as well from

the multiplication of the domestic animals and augmented agricultural produce of the soil, as from the additional demand and consequent increase of price which the opening of the trade to strangers has caused, that the missionaries are not only able to maintain themselves, but have to spare; and in place of receiving supplies from Mexico are even obliged to maintain the government troops. And although it has been a general opinion in Mexico since the Revolution that the Californian system should be altered, yet it would appear that the government under the presidency of Bustamante, or rather the ministry of Alaman, thought otherwise; for in 1833 they sent a reinforcement of eleven Franciscan Friars with a new Prefect of the same order at their head. These Friars were some time detained at Tepic, a town near San Blas, waiting for a vessel, where I had an opportunity of seeing them. They were fresh from a Convent of Zacatecas, where the rules are very strict; they all wore a habit of the coarsest grey woollen cloth, their crowns shaven, and sandals on their feet. They were totally ignorant of the world, and of every thing respecting the country which they were going to govern. They brought to one's mind, in the most lively manner, the days of the pilgrimages of the middle ages; and if the anomalous nature of their destination could have been kept out of view, they would have formed

an interesting group. As it was, it was impossible not to feel respect for their character, and a degree of veneration mixed with pity on thinking on their destiny and observing their very pious, humble, and meek demeanor. It will not be here out of place to give, in a few words, the future history of these poor friars, as it will illustrate at once their character and the still very unsettled state of these countries. It will also doubtless remind the reader of the old days of Fathers Salvatierra and Junipero Serra.

General Figueroa being appointed military governor or commandant general of Upper California, chartered a vessel in Acapulco to take himself with some officers and soldiers to Monterey, and intended to call at San Blas for eleven Missionaries who were to join him there. Instead however of proceeding directly to San Blas, he thought it would be better to touch at San Lucas in Lower California, disembark there with the soldiers, and send the ship to San Blas for the friars, and then to proceed to Mazatlan for some military stores. This was accordingly done; and while the vessel was in the bay of Mazatlan, and after having the gunpowder and most of the other stores on board, she was struck with lightning, which passed along the mizen mast into the hold and set fire to some materials very near the powder. The fire was fortunately extinguished before any bad consequence ensued. The

lightning passed close to the cabin of the friars who were all below, and it was remarked with what wonderful calmness they betook themselves to their only remedy, their sacred offices and rosaries; it was indeed only by force that the officers and seamen could remove them from off the hatch to get down the magazine which was immediately below them; and they were thus only saved by the prompt exertions of the seamen from being blown to atoms. This danger being over and the vessel again put to rights, she proceeded to cape San Lucas to take on board the general and troops; and as the friars were all sick,—never having before even seen salt water—they went on shore the moment the ship came to anchor. The general then gave orders for embarkation next morning, and the first division of soldiers proceeded to the beach with ammunition, arm-chests, &c. When the whole was ready for putting off in the launch, a serjeant informed his officers that he and his comrades had determined not to proceed to Upper California, declared for the party of general Santa Anna then in revolution against the government, and avowed their intention of proceeding to San Blas to join their brother patriots engaged in the same cause; at the same time arming themselves they proceeded to fire upon the quarters of the general with whom were the unfortunate friars. In this extremity the general and

his companions, who were unarmed, had to fly, and the mutineers took possession of the ship, and obliged the captain to carry them to San Blas, taking along with them the military chest in which were sixteen thousand dollars, as well as the private property of the general and his officers. The serjeant, however, generously, or rather piously, sent on shore before his departure three thousand dollars for the friars, thus verifying what is far from uncommon, that a very considerable degree of religious feeling may be manifested by those who are guilty of the most atrocious crimes. The poor friars were now left in an almost desert country; and having experienced so unpromising an onset in their sea voyage, resolved not to trust themselves again to that element which seemed to them so unpropitious, and which had also been so fatal to their predecessors the first settlers of California. They at first determined to follow the route by land which the Father Junipero had done so many years before them; but reflecting upon the difficulties which presented themselves, and receiving the counsel, or perhaps commands of the general, they were at length prevailed on to proceed to La Paz and there wait further orders from Mexico.

In the mean time the vessel proceeded on her voyage to San Blas, during which the serjeant broke open the military chest, and took what money