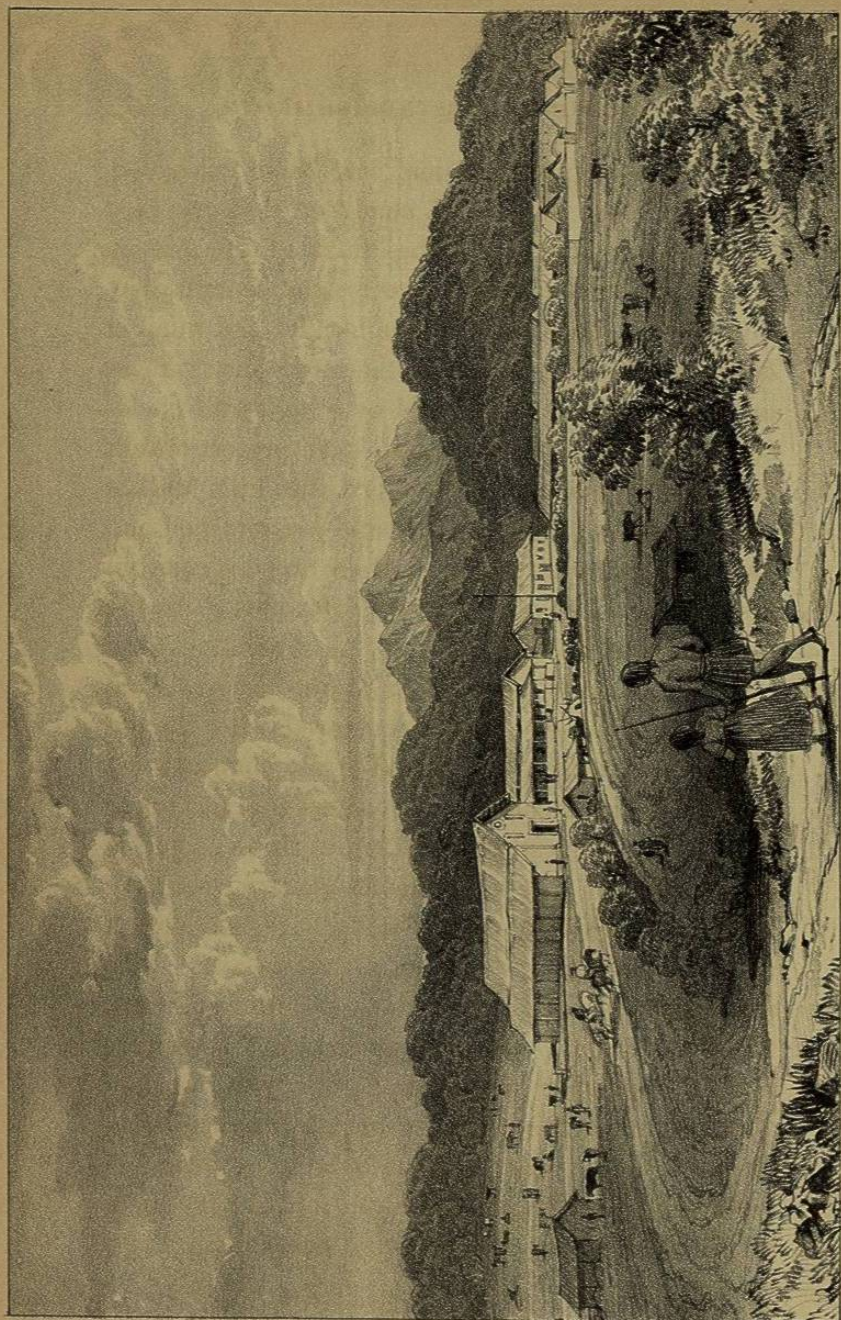


cal difference between the free creole race (including the mestizos or those of mixed blood) and the enslaved Indians of the missions. The Creoles are a remarkably fine set of people, of large stature, and of as athletic form as perhaps any other in the world. I have seen natives of Upper California who might pass for the fabled giants of Patagonia: and when they go at times to the Mexican coast, the contrast between them and the emaciated inhabitants of the agueish shores of the more southern country, is most conspicuous.

THE MISSIONS.—These establishments are all formed on the same plan and consequently greatly resemble each other. They vary, however, according to their extent, standing, and population, and also according to the individual character of the directing fathers for the time being. Each mission is governed by one or more missionaries, all friars of the order San Francisco. One of these is styled *Prefect*, and not President as was formerly the case. Through him is (or was) carried on all the public correspondence with the government of Mexico; but he has no power superior to the others, and each may be said to be absolute in his own mission. Each mission has allotted to it, in the first instance, a tract of land of about fifteen miles square, which is generally fertile and well suited for husbandry. This land is set apart for the



THE MISSION OF SAN FRANCISCO, UPPER CALIFORNIA.

Capt. W. B. Smith del.

Engr. by Smith, Elder & Co. New York.

general uses of the mission, part being cultivated, and part left in its natural condition and occupied as grazing ground. The buildings of the mission are, like the Presidio, all on the same general plan, but are varied according to the locality and number of the inhabitants. Most of the missionary villages or residences are surrounded by a high wall enclosing the whole; others have no such protection but consist of open rows of streets of little huts built of bricks: some of these are tiled and whitewashed and look neat and comfortable; others are dirty and in disrepair and in every way uncomfortable. In the mission of Santa Clara, which in several respects excels the others, the houses of the Indians form five rows or streets, which compared with the old straw huts must be considered really comfortable: and this is the greatest improvement that has taken place in the domestic civilization of these people at the missions. The buildings are generally built in the form of a square or part of a square, the church usually forming a portion of the elevation. The apartments of the fathers, which are often spacious, the granaries and work-shops compose the remainder. The Indian population generally live in huts at about two hundred yards distant from the principal edifices; these huts are sometimes made of *adobes*, but the Indians are often left to raise them on their own plan; viz. of rough poles erected into

a conical figure, of about four yards in circumference at the base, covered with dry grass and a small aperture for the entrance. When the huts decay, they set them on fire, and erect new ones; which is only the work of a day. In these huts the married part of the community live, the unmarried of both sexes being kept, each sex separate, in large barn-like apartments, where they work under strict supervision. The storehouses and workshops, at some of the larger missions, are of great extent and variety. There may be seen a place for melting tallow, one for making soap, workshops for smiths, carpenters, &c., storehouses for the articles manufactured, and the produce of the farms; viz. stores for tallow, soap, butter, salt, wool, hides, wheat, peas, beans, &c. &c. &c. Four or five soldiers have their residence a few yards further off, and are meant to watch the Indians, and to keep order; but they are generally lazy, idle fellows; and often give the missionary more trouble than all his Indians; and instead of rendering assistance increase his troubles. But in all Spanish countries, nothing can possibly be done without soldiers, and the idea of having any public establishment without a guard of soldiers would appear quite ridiculous.

The church is, of course, the main object of attraction at all the missions, and is often gaudily decorated. In some of the missions where there is

good building-stone in the vicinity, the external appearance of the sacred building is not unseemly; in other missions the exterior is very rude. In all of them the interior is richer than the outside promises. In several there are pictures, and the subject of these is generally representations of heaven or hell, glaringly coloured purposely to strike the rude senses of the Indians. Pérouse says that the picture of hell in the church of San Carlos has, in this way, done incalculable service in promoting conversion; and well remarks that the protestant mode of worship, which forbids images and pompous ceremonies, could not make any progress among these people. He is of opinion that the picture of paradise in the same church, has exerted comparatively little effect on account of its tameness: but Langsdorff tells of wonders in this way wrought by a figure of the virgin represented as springing from the coronal of leaves of the *Agave Americana*, or great American aloe, instead of the ordinary stem! The priests also take care to be provided with rich dresses for the same purpose of inspiring awe.

The object of the whole of the Californian or missionary system being the conversion of the Indians and the training of them up, in some sort, to a civilized life, the constant care of the fathers is and ever has been directed towards these ends.

The children born in the missions are, of course, devoted to the missionary discipline from their infancy; but the zeal of the fathers is constantly looking out for converts from among the wild tribes on the borders of their territories. Formerly when the missionaries were strangers in the land, and the natives were numerous, and spread around their settlements, there was no lack of materials on which to exercise their converting zeal. But for a good many years the case has been different; the natives have become fewer in number and have been gradually receding from the missionary territory: the very progress of conversion has necessarily occasioned this. New means of obtaining converts have been therefore had recourse to; and there can be no doubt that some of these means go far beyond the bounds of legitimate persuasion. It would be injustice to tax the Fathers with openly sanctioning, much less directing the more severe of these means; yet they cannot be altogether ignorant of them, and must be regarded as encouraging them indirectly. And, indeed, it must be admitted that with their particular views of the efficacy of baptism and ceremonial profession of christianity in saving souls, the conversion of the Indians even by force, can hardly be otherwise regarded by them than as the greatest of benefits conferred on these people and therefore justifying some severity in

effecting it. No one who has seen or known any thing of the singular humanity and benevolence of these good Fathers will for a moment believe that they could sanction the actual cruelties and bloodshed occasionally wrought in their name by the military and more zealous converts. Certain it is, however, that every encouragement is held out to all, who shall bring in *Gentiles* for conversion. Converts that can be depended on are stationed in the vicinity of the haunts occupied by their wild brethren, whose business it is to represent their own condition in the most favourable light possible, with the view of inducing them to join the missionary fold. Others are permitted to pay visits to their kindred of more distant tribes, with the same views, and are almost expected to bring back converts with them. "At a particular period of the year also" we are told by Captain Beechey, "when the Indians can be spared from the agricultural concerns of the establishment, many of them are permitted to take the launch of the mission and make excursions to the Indian territory. On these occasions the padres desire them to induce as many of their unconverted brethren as possible to accompany them back to the mission, of course implying that this is to be done only by persuasion; but the boat being furnished with a cannon and musketry, and in every respect equipped for war, it too often happens that

the neophytes and the *gente de razón*, who superintend the direction of the boat, avail themselves of their superiority, with the desire of ingratiating themselves with their masters and of receiving a reward. There are, besides, repeated acts of aggression which it is necessary to punish, all of which furnish proselytes. Women and children are generally the first objects of capture, as their husbands and parents sometimes voluntarily follow them into captivity.*

One of these proselytising expeditions into the Indian territory occurred during the period of Captain Beechey's visit in 1826, which ended in a battle with the loss, in the first instance, of thirty-four of the converted, and eventually in the gain (by a second expedition sent to avenge the losses of the first) of forty women and children of the invaded tribes. These were immediately enrolled in the list of the mission, and were nearly as immediately converted into Christians. The process by which this was effected is so graphically described by Captain Beechey that it would be doing him injustice to use any words but his own.

"I happened (he says) to visit the mission about this time and saw these unfortunate beings under tuition. They were clothed in blankets, and arranged in a row before a blind Indian, who under-

* Voyage II, 24.

stood their dialect, and was assisted by an alcalde to keep order. Their tutor began by desiring them to kneel, informing them that he was going to teach them the names of the persons composing the Trinity, and that they were to repeat in Spanish what he dictated. The neophytes being thus arranged, the speaker began: "Santissima Trinidad, Dios, Jesu Christo, Espiritu Santo"—pausing between each name, to listen if the simple Indians, who had never spoken a Spanish word before, pronounced it correctly, or any thing near the mark. After they had repeated these names satisfactorily, their blind tutor, after a pause added, "Santos"—and recapitulated the names of a great many saints which finished the morning's tuition.*

After a few days, no doubt, these promising pupils were christened, and admitted to all the benefits and privileges of Christians and *gente de razón*. Indeed I believe that the act of making the cross and kneeling at proper times and other suchlike mechanical rites, constitute no small part of the religion of these poor people. The rapidity of the conversion is, however, frequently stimulated by practices much in accordance with the primary kidnapping of the subjects. "If, as not unfrequently happens, any of the captured Indians show a repugnance to conversion, it is the practise to im-

* Ib. p. 30

prison them for a few days, and then to allow them to breathe a little fresh air in a walk round the mission, to observe the happy mode of life of their converted countrymen; after which they are again shut up, and thus continue incarcerated until they declare their readiness to renounce the religion of their forefathers.* As might be believed, the ceremonial exercises of the Roman Catholic religion, occupy a considerable share of the time of these people. Mass is performed twice daily, besides high-days and holidays, when the ceremonies are much grander and of longer duration; and at all the performances every Indian is obliged to attend under the penalty of a whipping; and the same method of enforcing proper discipline as in kneeling at proper times, keeping silence, &c., is not excluded from the church service itself. In the aisles and passages of the church, zealous beadles of the converted race are stationed, armed with sundry weapons of potent influence in effecting silence and attention, and which are not sparingly used on the refractory or inattentive. These consist of sticks and whips, long goads, &c., and they are not idle in the hands of the officials that sway them.

The following is the course of proceedings in the missions, on ordinary occasions; and as there is little or no variety in their monotonous life, the pic-

* Beechey, Vol. I, 18.

ture may be received as a general one. It was thus witnessed by Pérouse, and it is equally extant at the present time. The Indians as well as the missionaries rise with the sun and go to mass, which lasts about an hour. While this is in progress the breakfast is prepared, the favorite *Atole* or pottage, which consists of barley flour, the grain being roasted previously to grinding. It is cooked in large kettles, and is seasoned with neither salt nor butter. Every cottage or hut sends for the allowance for all its inmates, which is carried home in one of their bark baskets. Any overplus that remains, is distributed among the children as a reward for good behaviour, particularly for good lessons in the catechism. After breakfast, which lasts about three quarters of an hour, they proceed to their labours, either out of doors or within. At noon the dinner is announced by a bell, and the Indians quitting their work go and receive their rations as at breakfast time. The mess now served is somewhat of the same kind as the former, only varied by the addition of maize, peas and beans: it is named *pozzoli*. After dinner they return to their work, from two to four or five; afterwards they attend evening mass which lasts nearly an hour, and the day is finished by another supply of *atole*, as at breakfast. In the intervals of the meals and prayers, the Indians are of course variously employed

according to their trade or occupation, that is to say, either in agricultural labours, according to the season, or in the store-rooms, magazines, and laboratories of the mission. The women are much occupied in spinning, and other little household labours, the men in combing wool, weaving, melting tallow, &c., or as carpenters, shoemakers, bricklayers, blacksmiths, &c. One of the principal occupations of the missions is the manufacturing a coarse sort of cloth from the wool of their own sheep, for the purpose of clothing the Indians. The grinding the corn is left almost entirely to the women, and is still performed by a hand mill. All the girls and widows are kept in separate houses during the day while at work, being only permitted to go out occasionally, like boys at school. The unmarried of both sexes, as well adults as children, are carefully locked up at night in separate houses, the keys being left in the keeping of the Fathers; and when any breach of this rule is detected, the culprits of both sexes are severely punished by whipping, the men in public, the women privately.

It is obvious from all this, that these poor people are in fact slaves under another name; and it is no wonder that Pérouse found the resemblance painfully striking between their condition and that of the negro slaves of the West Indies. Sometimes, although rarely, they attempt to break their bonds

and escape into their original haunts. But this is of rare occurrence, as, independently of the difficulty of escaping, they are so simple as to believe that they have hardly the power to do so, after being baptised, regarding the ceremony of baptism as a sort of spell which could not be broken. Occasionally, however, they overcome all imaginary and real obstacles and effect their escape. In such cases, the runaway is immediately pursued, and as it is always known to which tribe he belongs, and as, owing to the enmity subsisting among the tribes, he will not be received by another, he is almost always found and surrendered to the pursuers by his pusillanimous countrymen. When brought back to the mission he is always first flogged and then has an iron clog attached to one of his legs, which has the effect of preventing his running away and marking him out *in terrorem* to others.

Notwithstanding this dark picture of the general mode of life of the converted Indians, it must not be imagined that it is one of much real hardship, or that it is generally thought so by the parties themselves. On the contrary, it accords too well with the native indolence of their character and total defect of all independent spirit. It is true, that the system tends most powerfully to keep up and to aggravate the natural defects in their character, and to frustrate all prospect of true civilization and