CHAPTER XI.

AN OLD DIARY.

THERE was among the Franciscan Friars who were at the College of San Fernando, in Mexico, awaiting preparations for the great Missionary expedition to Alta California, one named Palou. There is no telling precisely what this priest's especial education consisted in, or how it happened that it devolved upon him to become the historian of the beginnings, but he was so, and in vigorous and beautiful Spanish narrates the story of that first journey into the wilds of California in such a manner that a gentleman whose acquaintance with the region is wide and long, has told me he could take Palou's journal and locate with reasonable certainty every camping-place of the first expedition.

"THE ORIGINAL CALIFORNIAN."

But the story was not written for publication, or as history, and is tedious after the manner of the times and the Spanish fashion. Cervantes himself

lacked the faculty of condensation, and there are pages of insufferable tedium in every old Spanish author. Long before starting chapter after chapter is used in telling why such and such a thing was considered best; what the *Virey* thought and what intentions he had; and *mientras* this and *por supuesto* that. A man named Galvez was Virey, or viceroy, and through and by him was done everything that was done. He was a man of ability, conscience and prudence, with an enormous faculty for detail and a genius for inventories, who doubtless saw in his mind every need of a system of missions the most extensive ever planned by one man, and who pre-arranged every camping-place, and yet knew no more, nor did any of them, of the geography of the region or the character of the natives, than does a reader of this page who never saw California. Indeed, he did not know so much. No adult need now be puzzled by the problem of where to find Monterey.

The information Galvez had to go upon and make all his minute arrangements by; the data upon which he ordered equipment, money, provisions and soldiers; was contained in the record of the voyage of Vizcaino, who "surveyed" and named the Bay of San Diego only a hundred and sixty-seven years previously, had miscalculated its latitude and longitude, had mislaid the port of Monterey so seriously that the Padres could not find it, and who, with all his mariners and "pilots," had been long beyond later explanation or recall. This is but an example of the disposition of those queer times to follow precedent and observe routine, and is, besides, pre-eminently

Spanish. They spent a year or two in perfecting minute arrangements for the occupation and conversion of a country they had never seen, in implicit reliance upon the word of a sailor who seldom or never went on shore, and for the sole reason that Philip, a King of Spain, had sent him, and nobody had gone with equal authority since.

They knew nothing of a matter of still greater importance—the character of the California Indians. It is certain that had these been kindred of the Iroquois or Hurons, or even of the Mojaves or Piutes, the destruction of the expedition would only have occupied them for a matter of two or three hours. For the Spaniards were but a handful in the mountain wilderness, and their weapons were not as effective as the Indian bow-and-arrow. They carried tents and litters, and were burdened with the care of what Palou refers to as "*las bestias*;" the drove of long-horned cattle which were the best things Galvez had thought of. Besides their camp-equipage, they had their church furniture,* more bulky and more necessary perhaps than the reader imagines, and said mass every morning before starting out on the day's march.

* Palou gives the following list of necessaries provided and carried to San Diego:

Seven church bells; 11 small altar bells; 23 altar cloths; 5 choir-copes; 3 surplices; 4 carpets; 2 coverlets; 3 *roquettes*; 3 veils; 19 full sets of sacred vestments; 17 albs, i. e., white tunics; 10 palliums; 10 amices; 10 chasubles; 12 girdles; 6 cassocks; 18 altar-linens; 21 *purificadories*, or chalice-cloths; 1 pall-cloth; 11 pictures of the Virgin; 12 silver chalices; 1 silver goblet; 7 silver vials for sacred oil; 1 silver casket for holy wafers; 5 silver basins, or *conchas*, for baptism; 6 censers, with dishes and spoons; 12 pairs of *vinagres*, for wine and water; 1 silver cross, with pedestal; 1 box containing Jesus, Mary and Joseph; other smaller articles too numerous for mention; 29 metal candlesticks; 1 copper dipper for holy water; another list of little things; 3 statues; 2 silver "dazzlers;" 2 crowns and rings for marriages; 5 consecrated stones; 4 missals, and a continued list of stands, laces, silks, linens, etc., etc.

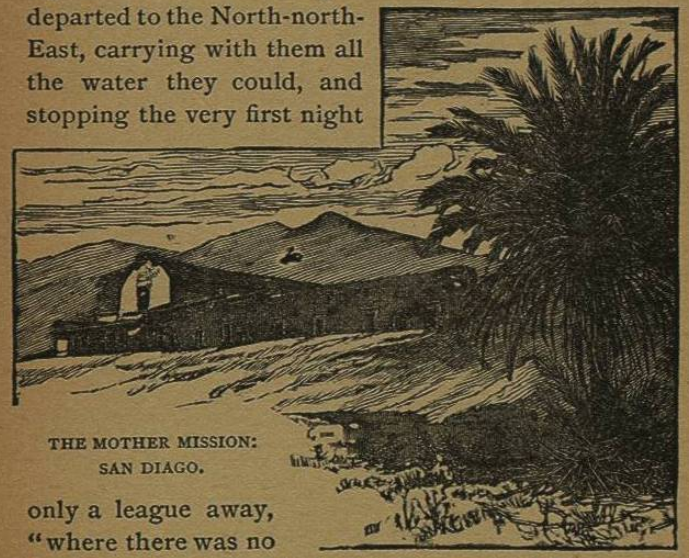
A quaintness not to be conveyed by any translation pervades the minuteness of the diary of this first white man's journey in California. It was on the afternoon of the twenty-fifth of March, 1769, that the expedition started out from Villacata through the cactus, northward into the unknown. Sometimes two or three little children start to go somewhere. They have entire confidence in their ability to find the place, and know whom they shall meet, and what they shall have, when they get there. They take the world as they have found it so far, and are undaunted by difficulties they do not know of. Sometimes they really succeed in making the journey. So did these Missionaries in reaching San Diego, and even finally Monterey, and the Providence that guided them can not have been very different from that which protects little children.

Meantime, amid all these pious desires and counselings about petty things, and looking out for bells and chalices and robes and altar-cloths, affairs of so much more moment were progressing on the opposite side of the continent that it is very doubtful, in the full light of the past, whether or not the enterprise of the Padres and the Virey affected in the least the final result as we see it now. They added an illuminated page to history, with "D. O. M." and a cross at the top, and "REQUIESCAT IN PACE" at the bottom, while the Atlantic Saxon was setting down the first lines of a long, red, momentous historic chapter. For George III. was King of England. All non-believers in the divine right will excuse the not original remark that he was a very addle-headed

monarch, who about these years, 1768–69–70, was unconsciously, with all the assistance he could get from his ministry, laying the pipes, so to speak, for the final floating over California, and all the rest of this continent, of a nondescript banner whose size and shape, whose azure field and stripes and stars, had not yet been dreamed of. While this cowled and helmeted company were starting out on this coast, twenty-five newspapers, mostly devoted to sedition and rebellion, were being printed and issued on the other. The tea excitement was beginning. The citizens were refusing to comply with the provisions of the "Quartering Act," and were turning out of doors the soldiers they intended to begin killing as soon as convenient afterwards. Before the hidden Monterey was finally discovered the "Boston Massacre" had occurred, and a thing the Virey never heard of, and would have contemplated with horror if he had, a "Liberty-pole," was cut down in Boston by the imported "hirelings" who might better have left it stand. While the San Carlos and her sistership lay in the Bay of San Diego, carrying their sacred stores and their church bells ashore, and burying their scurvy-slaughtered seamen in the yellow sand, on the opposite coast the Gaspé was being burned to the water's edge. The bells upon one coast were ringing in the advent of monarchy; those of the other were ringing it out. Mass was saying beneath tents and trees, accompanied by the noise of fire-arms, while to the same accompaniment the Puritan divine was explaining, to suit himself and his

hearers, the meaning of that Liberty which is in the gospel, wherewith ye are made free.

Strangely enough there are in Palou's journal no exclamations of pious joy at the long-dreamed starting out of that expedition which was to bring the "gentiles" unto the light. They said mass and departed to the North-north-East, carrying with them all the water they could, and stopping the very first night only a league away, "where there was no forage for the beasts." This journey which began on March 25th, 1769, has been skillfully made the most of by very excellent and well-informed, but enthusiastic writers, but to whomsoever has chased Apaches through the mountains of New Mexico, or made the overland journey to California in the early times, there would seem nothing very appalling about it except its uncertainty, and nothing heroic except its object. It required to make it from the date



THE MOTHER MISSION: SAN DIAGO.

mentioned to the 14th day of May; fifty days; and the distance traversed, including a thousand twistings and turnings, was about six hundred miles. No cold impeded them, or rivers, or swollen streams. It rained, and even that hindered them so grievously that they waited in camp until it ceased. There is much simplicity in the chronicler's accounts of how "we were all made very wet," and "it rained so hard this night that the Señor Commandant invited me to put my bad tent under his good one," and "everything being very wet, we did not march today, but waited for our clothes to dry."

As in hundreds of journeys since made, the finding of water was the chiefest difficulty, but, so far as the record shows, not a single night was passed without sufficient for themselves, though the poor "bestias" had sometimes to wait until morning. This was the beginning of that endless record of "dry cramps" which every soldier and plainsman knows, and also of that old story of grass-and-no-water, and water-and-no-grass which have alternated with each other in endless monotony through the entire "trail" history. Sometimes they had them both in abundance, with "llanuras," and plenty of valley land, and then the chronicler, after looking the country over, sets it down in his journal that it would be "a good place for a mission." One is amused at the closeness with which the country is observed and described to this end, and with how few mistakes, and the language is such as would be used to this day by a practical man to describe a

situation available for farming purposes in California. In all the years that followed no missions were planted in Palou's places. To this day his route remains almost as tenantless as it was in 1769, and only the ranchman's cattle have drunk of his streams and "pozos," and pastured upon his "llanuras" and "buenas tierras" few and far apart. But he was moved by a holy covetousness whenever he saw them. The growths he describes by Spanish names with superior aptitude and judgment, and sometimes he alights upon those "*rosas de Castilla, cargados de rosas*"—roses of Castile, burdened with flowers—which almost excite his enthusiasm. A monk and the abstruse sciences may go together with some propriety, but when he sets flowers down in his journal, not in direct connection with Mary and her month of May, one may know that he sighed as he wrote, and thought of his youth and his native land.

There is a notable difference in Palou's expressed opinions of the country as he comes further northward. The second day out, losing patience with a monotony and barrenness than which there is hardly any more oppressive in the world, he makes the oft-quoted remark that "it is a country in which nothing abounds but stones and thorns."* It is almost the only sign of weariness in a diary that was written every day on the spot, out of a peripatetic inkhorn, and under circumstances that usually require some retrospect to give them anything like a tinge of rosiness. The

* "La tierra sigue como las demas de la California, estéril, árida, falta de zacate y agua, y solo abundante de piedras y espinas."

barrenness of the route seems then to have been largely where it is yet; south of the Mexican boundary line; and the Spaniard of a later day, with the singular fatality that accompanies him, lost most of the good and kept the bad. Even on that day when the monk tried all the afternoon to make some "Hostias;" — some wafers of flour with which to celebrate the mass — "and did not succeed in taking out a single one that was fit," he makes no remark except a reference afterwards to his *mala suerte;* his "bad luck;" and merely adds in the next day's record that they went without services that morning.

But it is the Indian, the utterly abandoned aborigine of those times, who especially invites his attention. The journal inevitably gives the reader the impression that there were many of them. They appear almost every day, and always a new tribe, with some new variety of savage amiability or diablerie. He touches them only here and there descriptively, and manages to convey in a few words a graphic picture of them and the nature of the souls he and his companions had come to save. Wherever at that time he had procured the word "*rancheria,*" as expressive of a congregation of Indian dwellings, he had it, and it has descended to all who have since lived where such settlements are to be found. They were encountered almost every day. Sometimes their inhabitants were inclined to be friendly, at others a little inclined to inquire at a distance the nature and character of their visitors. The expedition had with it some natives of the peninsula of California who had already been reformed at one

of the missions of that country; say at Muliege, a name the present writer, if the reader, would not recognize or even pronounce, had he not once had the doubtful pleasure of visiting the spot, where now remains not the remotest indication of the presence of Jesuit, Franciscan, or aborigine. These Indians grew ill. Some of them died. Some of them "*huyeron*" — ran away to join their people again, discouraged by unwonted wanderings from home — and after them, "misguided," the reverend journalist sends his blessing, couched in terms forgiving, but probably not appreciated by the fugitives had they known them, with their views of life, friends, and the sterile homes they had known from birth. While they were sick they were carried in litters. When they died they were given the rites of the Church, and their bodies were buried in the wilderness, "and at the place of their sepulture we planted crosses."

To all the Indians they met they gave the little conciliating presents barbarians love, and once or twice, when vaguely threatened, "*el Señor Commandante*" directed the soldiers to fire their guns, but not toward the savages. This had the effect desired of scaring them away, and the expedition proceeded.

Once in a while Palou gives his private opinion of these people, notably those seen when near their journey's end at San Diego. One aged native, he says, was found sitting on a rock by a rancheria, everybody else being apparently away from home. When asked to guide them, the trusting savage got up and took his bow and arrows and cheerfully went along as far as his services were needed. When dismissed with

presents, the reading of the narrative gives one the impression that he complacently trotted back home again, "muy contento," and precisely as though he had known white men from an unknown world all his life. Several times it is noted that the men were entirely naked, and the women nearly so. Of others that they are "Indians very lively, jokers, childish, swappers or bargainers, deceivers and thieves."

There is sometimes a touch of Spanish humor, which, when it can be recognized by the alien at all, is the quaintest in the world. "Hardly in the proper way," he says, "do all the men and women go about entirely naked, as was Adam in Eden before sinning, not having the least shame in presenting themselves before us without making any attempt at covering otherwise than as though the garment nature gave them was a court dress."

He tells of their houses, which he states with the gusto of a modern Western journalist were made of hay—"*zacate*"—and how immediately afterwards they discovered that these primitive dwellings contained inhabitants who were very active and lively, and great thieves. One of them "stole from the soldiers, without anybody seeing him, some spurs and 'sleeves' (arm-guards made of leather which soldiers wore), and from a priest who tarried here on a feast-day and said mass, the altar-bell and his spectacles, which he hid in the ground near the altar, and which cost much work in finding again, for which reasons they called that some Indian Barabbas."

This remarkably Indianesque specimen whose chicanery was thus embalmed in history, played his

pranks on "el padre presidente" himself, on the journey in search of Monterey. On such small points does history often turn, that one pauses in the reading of the quaint narrative to wonder what would have been the consequences had Father Junipero's big iron-framed "anteojos" never been found.

Of the gentiles found on still another day the reverend chronicler says: "They are very distinct from former ones, very pacific, humble and affable; during the day they were with us with as much confidence as if they had been with their own."

DIGGER AND WIFE.

And of others still succeeding: "They are Indians quite too lively and active, great beggars and very covetous of all they see which suits them, great thieves; they are great bellowers in their manner of speech, and when they talk they speak with shouts as though they were deaf."

The predominant animals of California are referred to in almost biblical terms as "conejos" and "liebres," and one thinks first of the Psalmist's "conies" and afterwards of those gray and alert creatures doubtless as plentiful then as now, who never allow a journey to become lonesome. Whether by the term "liebres" he meant the pervading "gopher" of these days one can not precisely tell, but the pouched rodent who has

galleried and mined the country over and over a thousand times, and who never tires in his tunneling, must have attracted his attention. The Indian who lived far enough north sometimes made himself an imperial robe of rabbit skins. It required seventy of them to make a single garment, and they walked into the traps he set for them with a carelessness which clearly indicated the cheapness of life among the rabbits both of those times and these. Birds are also mentioned, not as important, but rather casually, and he amuses himself and the reader, by giving them Spanish familiar names, as though they could not bear others with any propriety in the presence of this expedition. Indeed, the essence of Spain lives in Palou's journal unconsciously, and he judges even the Indians he was to convert from the Spanish view-point, and evidently forgets the natural difference between the moral standards of the Indian and the white man. To the reverend Padre, these poor creatures were committing some mortal sin every day of their lives, and every hour of the day. Lying, theft, and a shrewd and yet clumsy dealing with dæmons and witches, are among the virtues of savages. Treachery and deception are boasts, and cruelty is a harmless amusement and pastime. He whom they named "Barabbas" for peccadilloes which with any other red savage would have been exchanged for murder and rapine, suffered in his reputation from an ascetic view of virtue which he never appreciated even after his conversion, if, indeed, he ever came under the influences of the gospel.

Setting down the points which occurred to him from day to day as he journeyed through the wilderness, the author of this old diary falls under but one criticism. Unconsciously writing for the future, he does not say enough, and his conceptions are narrowed down to his one ambition, the sublime search for souls. Now that this quest has had its day and is over and gone, now that these "gentiles" are dead and the missions abandoned to the past and decaying where they stand, one wishes that the journalist, with his command of the best resources of his beautiful mother-tongue and his clearness of perception, had not been a missionary at all, and that he had seen even more of those temporalities his brethren afterwards appreciated so well.

The diary takes the reader to San Diego, telling very briefly of the sensations and joys of reaching that haven, and producing somehow the impression that the issue had been considered a doubtful one, and that at least so much had been permanently gained; for even the ships waited for them doubtfully and they were filled with joyful surprise at seeing the ships. It is, indeed, almost impossible for the present reader to rightly understand how blind and groping were these first journeyings in California; how the most intelligent could form no conceptions of the probable happenings of the morrow; how all the sea was an enchanted waste, and all the shore was a *tierra nueva* no civilized man had ever trod. It is the contrast between then and now that adds so much historical interest to a priest's journal, and imparts a pathetic touch to early gropings in a land now so thoroughly

known, and so much better than the Padre dared to think it was.

After San Diego comes the part which should have been so much easier, and was in fact so much harder; the search for the port of beautiful Monterey. The wanderers could not find it, and returned suffering, sore and unsuccessful. But they discovered instead, and without any idea of its importance, the real Bay of San Francisco, and Palou doubtless set it down as "a good place for a mission." Vizcaino or Cabrillo had never seen it, and the splendid piece of land-locked sea-water, entered by its narrow gate, is for the first time certainly and authoritatively described in this diary of a monk upon whose most brilliant conceptions never dawned the dimmest dream of that which should follow the temporary and fútile occupation of himself and his brethren. All the world knows now how little impression the actualities made upon either the Franciscans or their fellow-countrymen generally. For seventy-seven years no country was more entirely left alone by its owners and all the world beside, than New California. The scheme which incubated for more than a century and a half, and which was nevertheless a kind of spasm when it was put into final effect in the expedition of which this old diary is the official record, left its political originators exhausted with the effort, and they died and did no more.

It remains yet further a historical fact that the missionaries extending after Palou and his companions in a long semi-apostolic succession for more than seventy years, specially desired thus to be let alone.

They loved the autocratic power of isolation, and the unquestioned spiritual dominion which has been sweet to the heart of the cleric of every sect and time. No enthusiastic and rosy descriptions seem to have been sent back to Spain through all these years. They were reserved in all their fullness for another people and a later time. Above all were heretics not wanted. No student feels obliged to accept the opinion, when it is a matter of opinion, of any one man, though it be embodied in an article in the average encyclopedia. If one did, and were inclined to go with the majority, he would readily understand that when in this ancient diary the reverend father pointed out the "good places," he had in his mind visions of the wine and oil that should flow therefrom, and the clerical happiness that should surround them. But it is not true. The toilsome journey is surrounded with every element of self-sacrificing heroism. One may smile at its difficulties in the glaring light of the present, but so he also may at the recollection of the blunders he made last night in threading the familiar intricacies of his own chamber in the dark. The first light that was shed on the Californian solitudes was from the camp-fires of this expedition of the good year 1769.

Nevertheless, the strangers came; strangers not Spaniards. As early as 1830 they began to emerge from the deserts of the East like hungry shadows. Bearded Russians drifted down from the icy solitudes which were theirs in the far Northwest. Stranded sailors touched the shore and became enamored of it. In the year which saw the last scenes of the religious

history of California, five thousand persons crossed the endless plains to enter a land whose rocks were not yet known to be veined and crossed with gold.

The vexed souls of the Padres may rest in peace. The act of the Mexican government was not necessary. Sequestration would have come by the eternal law of circumstances, and had they stayed the missions would have been surrounded and engulfed by alien and heretical adventurers, and five more brief years would have seen the end of the halcyon rule which has had no paralled in the story of civilization, which illustrates the irony of fate, and which goes far toward convincing the cold and carping that he was right who said: "There are no such things as principles; there are only events. There are no such things as laws; there are only circumstances. A wise man embraces events and circumstances to shape them to his own ends." Yet to the "wise man" who rightly sees, it rather seems that Palou's old journal forms the first scant human record of a drama that was set by the Almighty upon the green hills whose destiny He knew alone

CHAPTER XII.

THE ORIGINAL CALIFORNIAN.

IN the Century Magazine for July, 1889, Mr. Frederic Remington contributed a chapter about Indians. In closing he allows himself to express that sentiment which is almost universal among those whose fate has led them into anything like personal acquaintance with the tribes and kindreds of the original American, and says: "I thought then that the good white men who would undertake to make Christian gentlemen and honest tillers of the soil out of this material would contract for a job to subvert the processes of nature."

THE DIGGER'S ANTIPODE:—A PUEBLO WOMAN.

In the same issue of the same magazine (see page 471) this and other opinions of Mr. Remington are duly apologized for by a writer who must have seen the article in manuscript, and who made his apology in deference to that peculiar form of public opinion which knows the American Indian for the reason that