



VOL. XXXVII.

MAY 4th, 1910.

No. 21.

Mission San Gabriel.

THE day was warm. Tired of the heat, dust and noise of city traffic, we boarded a car and passed from the city towards the south. Los Angeles at any time is beautiful, but in August it beggars all description. In the out-skirts of the city we passed long rows of beautiful bungalows surrounded by hedges of geranium, foliage or roses, and guarded in front by tall stately palms. Passing out of the city we were whirled through vast orange orchards where one occasionally caught a glimpse of the white coats of the pickers as they gathered in the last of the over-ripe valencias. On we went through lemon orchards and olive groves, past rows of palms and oleanders, by vine entwined residences surrounded by such a wealth of vegetation that we, accustomed to the quieter beauty of the Canadian landscape, had quite lost ourselves in wonder at the luxuriance of it all; when suddenly the conductor's "San Gabriel, all change!" aroused us, and we descended from the car to find ourselves in this historic little village of the great Southwest.

Walking up the village street, past many houses of modern design and others of *adobe*—a striking mixture of the old and the new—we came in sight of the old mission. At first glance the mission impresses one as a fortress rather than a church. The massive stone walls, supported at intervals of a few feet by heavy buttresses, suggests that it was built strongly with the idea of protection against outside enemies, but the belfry with its four great bells, the worn stone steps leading up to the choir gallery, and the great gilded cross rising above all, proclaim its purpose. The architecture of the building is known as "mission" and again as "Franciscan," and is of a type introduced into Spain by the Franciscans at the time of the Renaissance. It is said to be partly Moorish in origin and is characterized by the beautiful simplicity of its design. Although here and there its beauty has been somewhat marred by later "improvements," the greater part of the mission is yet intact and is to be seen as it was in the days of Father Junipero Serra its founder. The great belfry is still standing with four of its six bells yet in service. These same bells that in bygone ages, when California acknowledged allegiance to Spain, summoned melodiously the savage from his native haunts, still peal forth morning, noon and evening, to call the Spaniard, the Mexican and the Saxon to worship within its walls.

"O mission bells, sweet mission bells.
Fantastic tales thy chiming tells.
Of hooded monks with stately tread.