

In August, 1771, Padres Cambon and Somero left San Diego, with ten soldiers and muleteers, to establish a mission in the fertile valley now called San Gabriel. Little they knew, and less did they care, that a puritanical band in the woods bordering the Atlantic were growing restive under British misrule, for what could that signify to them beside the broad Pacific! Thousands of miles of prairie, desert, and cloud-shouldering mountains intervened, peopled with fierce tribes, thundering to the hoofs of buffalos, silently pitiless to life, or echoing through unfathomable canyons the movements of the grizzly bear. Who could imagine that the splash of tea chests in Boston harbor could produce a ripple that would spread in widening circles to the western slopes of the Sierras. Above these early missionaries waved the flag of Spain, red with the blood of slaughtered innocents, disgraced by the massacre of incas and nobles, stained by the brutality of the Inquisition. In its haughty pride it claimed the whole Pacific coast, yet Mexico waited to be free, and the Stars and Stripes, not then designed, were ordained to float upon the breezes that fanned the cheeks of these ambitious padres. The womb of history labors with surprises.

The mission church had been a conspicuous object long before we reached it, a quaint stone structure, with a somewhat Moorish bell-tower. All the mission buildings show the influence of the Moorish conquest of Spain in their architecture, and, indeed, this is shown to this day in Southern California in new, and even secular, buildings, such as the Santa Fe Railway station, at Los Angeles, which is very handsome, with arch, minaret and dome. As we drew near, winding deviously through the avenues of shade trees, or groves of lemons and oranges, we saw the five bells, whose mellow notes, with those of a sixth now, I believe, on the Baldwin ranch, sounded for many a year upon the sabbath stillness of San Gabriel Valley, rimmed with its azure hills.

We reached the mission. The secret of the power and du-