

CHAPTER I

FIRST VIEW OF PANORAMA OF BEAUTY FROM BERKELEY HILLS

I

On the 27th of March, 1772, four years before the Declaration of Independence was signed, white men for the first time ascended the Berkeley hills and looked out on the panorama of beauty long existent here.

The men who stood here that day in 1772, and from our hills looked out through the Golden Gate, were from the San Carlos Mission at Monterey. It was reverence for St. Francis of Assisi that brought them here.

One hundred and seventy years before that date, in the year 1602, a Spanish exploring vessel sailed into the harbor of Monterey, and some Carmelite priests thereon went ashore, built a rustic altar under the branches of a spreading oak, and worshipped God there according to the papal faith—eighteen years before the feet of the Pilgrim Fathers had touched Plymouth Rock.

One hundred and sixty-eight years rolled by after that religious service at Monterey, and then one day in 1770 Junipero Serra came and broke the long silence of the intervening years, and established in this part of California the first stated Christian work and worship.

On the 3d of June, 1770, a cross and an altar having been erected near the old oak under which the rustic altar had stood one hundred and sixty-eight years before, the royal banners being upraised, the solemn religious service of formal occupation of the Port of Monterey, on behalf of the Crown of Spain, was held, and the Mission San Carlos de Monterey took its place in the chain of missions established by the devoted Franciscan friar Junipero Serra.

This was during that period in our colonial history when Daniel Boone had pressed forward from North Carolina into western wildernesses, and from lofty hills at the headwaters of the Kentucky had looked out over a magnificent valley covered with dense forests and stretching away toward the Ohio—just beyond which lay what was then the great unsettled Northwest, out of which were to be carved

later the states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin.

But a purpose quite different from that which sent Boone into the wilds of Kentucky led the Franciscan friars to these far shores. Their marching orders dated back several centuries—to that day on Mount Olivet, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, when were spoken the words, "Go ye and disciple all nations." They came to take possession of California for God and for Spain, and their heroic devotion will make forever some of the most glorious pages in our history.

Long before the first Franciscan missions were established in California the name San Francisco had been given to a port on this coast. This was in 1595; and the port is supposed to have been the one under Point Reyes where Vizcanio anchored in 1603 and which was called by him at that time, and by later navigators and geographers the "Port of San Francisco."

In 1768, when preparations were being made for founding the Missions in California, the location of this port was unknown. When Galvez, the inspector-general, mentioned the three persons after whom the first missions were to be named, San Diego, San Buenaventura, and San Carlos, Father Serra enquired, "Sir, is there to be no mission for our Father St. Francis?"

The reply was: "If St. Francis wants a mission let him cause his port to be discovered and a mission for him shall be placed there."

The Portola expedition up from San Diego in 1769, in search for the Port of Monterey, passed that port and not only sighted and located the Old Port of San Francisco, but discovered also what is now known as San Francisco bay. This discovery of the port bearing the name of St. Francis led to an order from the viceroy in Mexico City for the founding of a mission at that port. The order was issued on the 12th of November, 1770, directing an exploration to that end. It reached Monterey May 21, 1771. Nine months, however, passed before an expedition was enroute from Monterey, along the east side of San Francisco Bay, with the expectation or hope that by such route the Old Port of San Francisco could be reached and the initial steps taken for the fulfillment of the order. Whatever the reasons for the delay, the expedition to survey the Port of San Francisco and select the best spot for a mission in honor of St. Francis did not start until March 20, 1772. It reached Berkeley, as hereinbefore stated, on the 27th of March, and encamped that night either on the banks of Strawberry Creek or Cerrito Creek in adjacent Albany.

About fifteen months earlier there had been an expedition up from Monterey along the east side of the Bay which may have reached the borders of Berkeley on the Claremont hills. Professor Herbert E. Bolton of the University of California is of the opinion that the sextants of that earlier expedition were actually set up in the Claremont region near the Country Club grounds. Others are of the opinion that the spot reached was a high hill in East Oakland, perhaps the Joaquin Miller heights.

The diary of Pedro Fages, the leader of that party, contains the following record for November 28, 1770:

"Four soldiers set out to explore the country, at night they returned saying that they had traveled about seven leagues to the north; that the country was very good and level. They stated that they had climbed to the top of a hill but had not been able to see the end of an estuary which lay at our left. They stated also that they had seen the mouth of the estuary, which they thought to be the one which entered through the bay of the port of San Francisco."

Immediately following the foregoing was this statement:

"This I confirm, through having seen it." Presumably on the following day, on which date was this entry:

"This day, seeing that we were unable to cross to the other side of the Punta de los Reyes without spending many days, and because of the anxiety which I felt for the camp, the cultivation of the land, and the raising of the stock, it was decided to go back."

In a letter to the viceroy, written on the 20th of June, 1771, a month after the order of November 12, 1770, had been received at Monterey, Fages made the following statement concerning the observations from the unknown spot which had been reached in 1770: "From the top of a hill at this place there was seen a large estuary; the mouth, as it appeared to me, and to the soldiers, was about three hundred yards [in width]. It reached about the same distance inland—and another a little narrower. Through these mouths ran a great quantity of water from the sea, forming two large estuaries. The one at our left must have gone south fifteen leagues. Of the course of the other, the one to the east, we saw about twenty [leagues]. From this we inferred that it was the estuary of the port of San Francisco of which the itinerary of Cabaera Buena speaks. Of it we could not see to the end, which made it necessary for us to turn back, for it lay across our path."

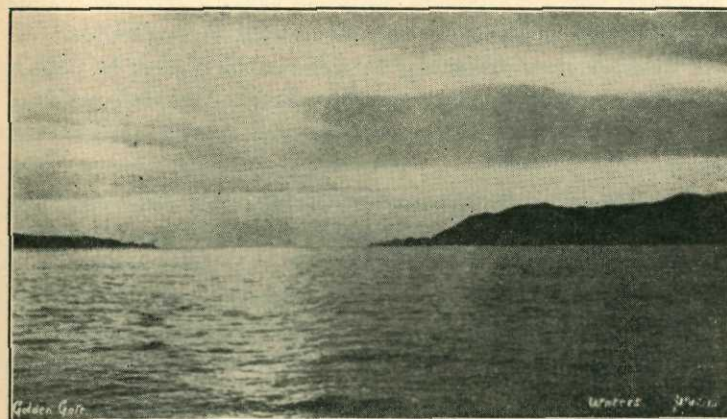
The expedition of 1772 consisted of sixteen persons: Lieutenant

Fages, twelve soldiers, a muleteer, a Lower California Indian, and Father Crespi, the spiritual leader.

The only source of information concerning the trip is the all-too-brief diary of Father Crespi. From the number of leagues covered each day it has been computed that in the forenoon of March 27, 1772, the expedition was in the part of Oakland called Brooklyn. The descriptions in the diary also so indicate. Some time during that day—by midday or soon thereafter, presumably—the party was in Berkeley, and the encampment probably was on the banks of Strawberry Creek. This much is plain! Just what points were touched by them on the present site of Berkeley is unknown; but, inasmuch as they kept close to the hills all the way from the Niles region and would seek points of vantage for the best view of the islands in the bay and the gateway into the sea, the logical conclusion is that they reached ground in the immediate neighborhood of the University. If anyone wishes to believe that Father Crespi, the devout Catholic priest, stood on "Founders' Rock,"—even prayed there as he looked out to the great sea—where the Protestant founders of the College of California stood eighty-eight years later and consecrated the grounds to Learning, let him so believe. It is a pleasurable thought, as is also the thought that he may have stood where Newman Hall stands today—that center of religious influence only a few hundred feet from "Founders' Rock," named in honor of one who first a Church of England man became a Catholic, and whom the Church Universal claims and owns today.

Starting at six o'clock on the morning of the 27th of March—there is record in Father Crespi's diary of ascending and descending well-pastured hills, a chronicling also of the fact that they kept to the hills, so as to avoid an estuary extending four or five leagues inland, back into the range itself. There is mention of an attempt to kill a bear, but an arroyo with steep and heavily wooded cliffs on both sides saves the life of the bear. A league more is traversed, and then there lies spread out before them "a spacious plain," "fertile and well-pastured throughout, extending about three leagues." Evidently the lowlands of Oakland and Berkeley, stretching away from the hills toward the bay—a beautiful green expanse, a virgin plain unbroken by human habitation. Several streams flow through the plain. Deer browse there; birds fly over it and flutter down on its grass-green turf. Out across the plain they look into what Crespi in his diary calls "the great mouth of the Bay of San Francisco parallel to the road-

stead of Point Reyes in front of which are scattered the seven Farallones," seen by them "when they had camped near the mouth [Golden Gate] in 1769. The mouth of the bay is estimated to be three-quarters of a league wide—with a Farallone about one eighth of a league from the south side; on the north, a half-submerged rock quite near the cliff at the entrance! There are five islands, three of which form a triangle opposite the mouth—with considerable distance between them; the nearest more than a league from the sea-gate; the largest of the three islands, which must be three leagues in circum-



The Golden Gate

ference, is well pastured and has trees in abundance; the three smaller also covered with verdure. The other islands somewhat separated—within the course of the bay which stretched away in a northeast direction."

The diary for that day here in Berkeley, in 1772, tells of a journey beautified not only by great stretches of rich green plains and verdure-covered islands dotting the waters of the bay, but also of roses of Castile which take their minds back to Spain, of lilies and of sweet marjoram—very luxuriant.

During the afternoon the soldiers explored the hills, and in camp later on the farther side of an arroyo in what is now West Berkeley, reported the discovery of three veins of some mineral-bearing ore. They told of a spring of water flowing from one of the mineral out-croppings in the nearby canyon flowing about 150 yards and entering then a little lake about 100 yards in diameter — "in appearance like an

orange." Three other springs of abundant water were designated not far away. These out-croppings and these springs and flowing water were designated as being just opposite the mouth of the bay—the Golden Gate¹ of later years—toward the northeast and distant therefrom several leagues. It is stated that very few natives were encountered—probably, so they thought, because of the bears. That night a bear was killed near the camp.

Breaking camp on the morning of March 28 the party pressed on toward the desired haven—the Old Port of San Francisco, out toward which eager eyes and expectant hearts had looked a few hours before from Berkeley's hills. Soon that port would be reached and the work would be done preliminary to a mission for Father St. Francis—thought of whom always warmed the heart of the devout Father Crespi though five hundred years separated them as master and disciple!

The day the exploring party left Berkeley they came upon San Pablo bay. The record is: "We ascended the heights of the bay

¹ The Golden Gate was named by Captain John Charles Fremont in 1846 and the name was put upon the map which accompanied the "Geographical Memoir" which he addressed to the United States Senate in June, 1848. In his "Memoirs," which was written in 1886, he gives a description of the Golden Gate in relation to the mountains and the sea, and states: "To this Gate I gave the name of *Chrysopolae*, or Golden Gate—for the same reasons that the harbor of Byzantium (Constantinople afterwards) was called *Chrysoceras*, or Golden Horn . . . The form of the harbor and its advantages for commerce; and that, before it became an entrepot of Eastern commerce, suggested the name to the Greek founders of Byzantium. The form of the entrance in the Bay of San Francisco and its advantages for commerce suggested to me the name which I gave to this entrance." It was from the hills on the East side of San Francisco Bay that Fremont first saw the Golden Gate and noted the resemblances which he stated later. The place from which he viewed it is supposed to be a short distance north of the Joaquin Miller Heights, and the time probably early in January, 1846, inasmuch as he was in San Francisco about the middle of that month and in all probability saw it at that time. It has come down from Joaquin Miller that Fremont camped one night at a spot near the Heights, reached by an old-time trail, almost obliterated in later years, and that it was then that he first saw the Golden Gate. The date of that encampment is unknown today, but it was probably a short time after he left Sutter's Fort early in January, 1846, enroute to San Francisco, accompanied by eight soldiers—record of which trip is in his "Memoirs."

or great lake, and turned around it for the purpose of passing on to the Sierras in the north in order to reach Point Reyes, near which we judged the real port to be, as we thought that in said lake the second estuary or arm of the sea terminated; but such was not the case, for towards the Sierra we saw that the estero continued although not any more so wide, but in a bed of a quarter of a league, and in parts less. This prevented us from reaching Point Reyes."

Their journeys in a short time led the party to a great river hitherto unknown to them, now the San Joaquin — concerning which Father Crespi's note is: "I gave this river the name of our Father San Francisco, in order that he might intercede with the Divine Majesty that this whole heathendom might be converted."

Near Antioch, on the San Joaquin, the party gave up the attempt to reach Point Reyes and turned back toward Monterey. St. Francis had to wait for his mission! No doubt his devoted disciples here in California were more grievously disappointed than St. Francis was. The saintly man who long before had stripped himself of all that he owned, whose desire had been henceforth to say nothing else than "Our Father who art in heaven," could wait its coming.

The following year Father Serra, visiting Mexico City, secured an order for a further survey, and thus for the founding of the mission, a desire for which, he thought St. Francis had plainly indicated by what was held to be a providential passing by of the Bay of Monterey and the consequent disclosure of the port bearing his name. An order to this end being issued in May, 1774, an expedition came up from Monterey in November of that year and planted a cross on the summit of a hill near Seal Rocks. Eight months later, in August, 1775, the first ship to enter San Francisco bay passed through what Father Crespi a few years before had called the mouth of the estuary or the sea-gate, bearing thither the Catholic fathers who began immediately a survey of the bay and its shores preparatory to establishing the long-desired mission of San Francisco De Asis. It was not, however, until October 9, 1776, that the mission was completely and formally established. Standing there a year later when he looked on San Francisco bay for the first time, and saying mass in the presence of seventeen Indian converts, Junipero Serra's loving heart uttered itself in the words: "Thanks be to God that now our Father St. Francis, with the Holy Cross of the Procession of Missions, has reached the last limit of the California continent," and then adding, "to go farther he must have boats."

II

Father Crespi, the spiritual leader of the exploring party which walked the Berkeley hills that day long ago and looked out on San Francisco bay from this point of beauty and vantage, did not see the bay again until 1781. In November of that year he tarried at the Mission of San Francisco De Asis for a few days, and then returned to San Carlos at Carmel, where on the first of January, 1782, he passed into the other life at the age of three score years. His dust lies under the altar of the old mission building there on the shores of the peaceful bay of Carmel—a name which takes us back to "The Garden of God" on the mountain ridges of Palestine. By Crespi's side was laid later the body of Father Serra, one of the most saintly characters California has ever had.

In his poem entitled "The Swallows at Mission Carmel," George Sterling, one of our California poets, has written:

"Serra sleeps within sound of the sea,
And the flock he fathered is long since still;
Over their graves the wild brown bee
Prowls, and the quail call over the hill.

"Serra is dust for a hundred years.
Dust are the ladies and lords of Spain—
Safe from sorrow and change and tears,
Where the grass is clean with the springtide rain.

"Meekly they slumber, side by side,
Cross and sword to the furrow cast,
Done forever with love and pride,
And sleep, as ever, the best at last.

"But over the walls that the padres laid,
The circling swallows come and go,
Still by the seasons undismayed,
Or the storms above or the dead below."

Fifty years and more passed by after these men from San Carlos Mission at Monterey camped on the Berkeley hills before there were any inhabitants on the east shores of San Francisco Bay except a few Indians. Year after year went by, repeating unchangingly the scenes of beauty; the hills and plains grew green, then brown; and then green again,—thus on and on unvaryingly. The wild oats grew on the hill-tops and the wild mustard bespangled the green of the fertile plains below. Wild flowers bloomed in beauty, but no heart responded to

their lavishness. The water sparkled in the bay day after day. The islands stood there as silent sentinels, and the mountains rimmed the horizon in changing shades and colors. An occasional ship came through the great unnamed Gate, through which some day was to flow the commerce of the world, and its officers and sailors looked out then as now toward the Berkeley hills—but it was to them and to the inhabitants of the Mission and the Presidio, with a few exceptions, a *terra incognita*. Occasionally soldiers would come across the Bay on hunting expeditions. In 1794 when some friars came up from the Mission at Santa Clara to San Francisco and expressed a desire to cross over to convert the Indians the commandant declared that the proposed undertaking was too dangerous.

It was during these passing years that the Russian steamer Juno came down from Sitka, Alaska, bearing Nikolai Rezanof, the Imperial Commissary of the Russian Company established there, and the beautiful romance of Dona Concepcion Arguella, daughter of the commandant at the Presidio, had its inception. Bret Harte has immortalized that romance:

"Each year the seasons shifted—
Wet and warm and drear and dry;
Half a year of clouds and flowers,
Half a year of dust and sky.

"Still it brought no ship, nor message—
Brought no tidings ill or meet,
For the statesmanlike commander,
For the daughter fair and sweet.

"Yet she heard the varying message,
Voiceless to all ears beside:
'He will come,' the flowers whispered;
'Come no more', the dry hills sighed.

"Still she found him with the waters
Lifted by the morning breeze;
Still she lost him with the folding
Of the great white-tented seas."