

# HISTORY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

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NO PERIOD of life is more interesting to the student of nature, than is that known as childhood. Not even the full tide of success upon which manhood is borne onward to the highest honors of professional life, pleases the philosophic observer so much, as do the early developments of the child. Mature honors which sit upon the wintry brows of age, are pleasant to contemplate as the rewards of a life well spent—but all are then more a souvenir than anything else. There is little of earthly hope left to be woven with those chaplets. Anticipations have been realized or disappointed. Memory is then most of life. And memory is ever sad, if not mournful. But the cradle and the nursery are presided over by the smiling goddess, Hope. Nothing of a gloomy past casts shadows upon the buds and blossoms of youth. Life is a joyful *avenir*, and we watch its every development as the horticulturist watches the sprouting plant, and the pomologist his budding scions. The growth of the soul is quite as delightful a study as is its matured expansion. Cities are like human creatures. They have their infancy, their childhood, old age. Some have even had their death, and have found after long ages of silence, their “Old Mortalities” to move away the rubbish from over their graves, brush the dust from their tomb-stones, decipher their epitaphs, and give the world their histories. Ninevah, Pompei, Palenque, begun, grew, matured, became old, passed away, and were forgotten in their graves of empires, until Layard, Stephens and others, gathered up their dust and preserved it in their classic urns. All periods of their history, could we have them in the language of Gibbon, Hume, or Prescott, would doubtless be of great interest. But it may be doubted if during the greatest conquests of Ninevah, the highest triumphs of the Roman Empire, or during whatever known glories may have clustered around the lost cities of the American continent, anything so pleasant to contemplate would be found, as the early signs of future greatness which accompanied their infancy. To see dark forests open to the sunlight, barbaric rites and customs fade before civilization’s illumining, to see the clipper supersede the canoe, the white sails of Commerce succeed the Indian paddle, and hear the steamer’s pattering wheel chronicle its progress where only the stealthy course of the savage in midnight silence had previously been; to mark the resolute landing of hale, adventurous, thinking, civilized men on shores hitherto trod only by the listless aboriginee, the transient foot of the buccaneer, or the visitant mariner in search of wood and water; to hear the war-whoop give way to the saw, hammer and ribbon-stripping plane, and note the cabin follow the original hut, the handsome dwelling succeed the squalid hearth-fire of the native; to observe how habitations advance upon the hill sides and out upon the ocean’s verge; lumber, brick and stone supplanting sticks, bark and brush; roofs of smoked hide and sooty willows