

# PROGRESS OF THE CITY

1879-80.

## CURRENT HISTORY.



SAN FRANCISCO, the youngest of America's great cities, has a history, which, though brief in its course of years, is a succession of rapidly occurring incidents, threading the romantic and marvelous, where the staid commonplaces of other lands seldom appear. The exact date of settlement, or founding, may be claimed for the time when the site of the Mission was first selected by Portala and Crespi in 1769; or when the Mission and Presidio were established by the good Friars Palou and Cambon in 1776; or when Richardson, in 1835, located here and established a trading post, calling the place Yerba Buena; or when Vioget, in 1839, surveyed the ground into streets and squares; or when in 1847, the Americans in possession, resurveyed and enlarged the area, and gave the name of San Francisco. A mediæval obscurity surrounds its early settlement and progress. The religious spirit of

the middle ages, even to a late date in the eighteenth century, still governing the Spanish people, prompted its devotees to penetrate the wild regions of the new world to spread the doctrines of the Church, and gather the heathen under its care rather than to enlarge the sphere of human liberties or pursue wealth by extending commerce or developing the resources of the country.

Under such auspices was the site of the City selected and occupied, thus giving in the brief period of a century, an ancient character to its history, advancing with a bound as it sprang from Spanish to American rule—from the semi-civilized past to the enlightenment and activity of modern times. The peculiar features of the City were not obliterated by the change. Ancient and simple as it was in its origin it has become the most busy and cosmopolitan of the age. Every State of the Union has its representative, and from every quarter of the globe have come its citizens; the language of every commercial people is spoken; every color which the human visage bears is seen, and every religion has its worshippers. These characteristics of cosmopolitanism distinguish the modern city from its sisters as did its mediæval features of early years from the settlements of the Atlantic Coast.

The very name of California was the invention of the novelist's brain, it being first found in the ancient romance entitled "Las Sergas del Muy Esforzado Esplandian higo del excelente re Amadis de Gaula," by Garcia Ordonez de Montalvo, published in 1510. Here it is represented as an island, saying "Know that, on the right hand of the Indies, very near the Terrestrial Paradise, there is an island called California, which is peopled with black women, without any men among them, because they are accustomed to live after the manner of the Amazons." To seek this fabled "island called California" was the object of several voyages undertaken by Cortez and his adventurous followers. Lower California was first discovered, and in 1539 its true character as a peninsula was determined by the explorations of Francisco de Ulloa. In 1542 the coast was explored as far north as Punta de los Reyes by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, and on March 3d, 1543, Bartolomo Ferrello, pilot and successor of Cabrillo, sailing down the coast, reported seeing the opening to the bay, now called the "Golden Gate," but he did not enter. This is the earliest mention of any indications of the Bay of San Francisco, although the bays of San Diego and Monterey and other landings and points had been particularly described. Sir Francis Drake anchored and refitted his ships in 1579, as he reports, in a "faire good day," which was "within thirty-eight degrees of latitude of the line," and a semi-circular bay is delineated on the old maps under that latitude, and called Sir Francis Drake's Bay. While many contend that the bay mentioned by Drake is identical with that of San Francisco, his account of it is so meagre and incorrect that he is not entitled to the honor of being called its discoverer. This honor is now accorded to Gaspar de Portala, who, in command of a party from San Diego, proceeding by land to Monterey, missed their destination, and in 1769 came upon the great bay, and upon its western shore selected the site for a Mission, now the Mission Dolores. On the 27th of June, 1776, the site was taken possession of by a party arriving by land from Monterey. [See Randolph Lecture, page 283.] The Golden

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