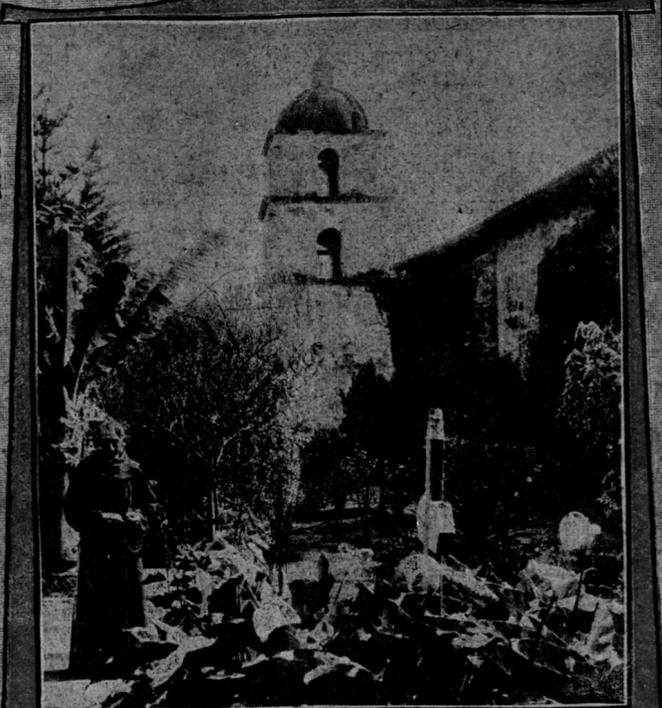
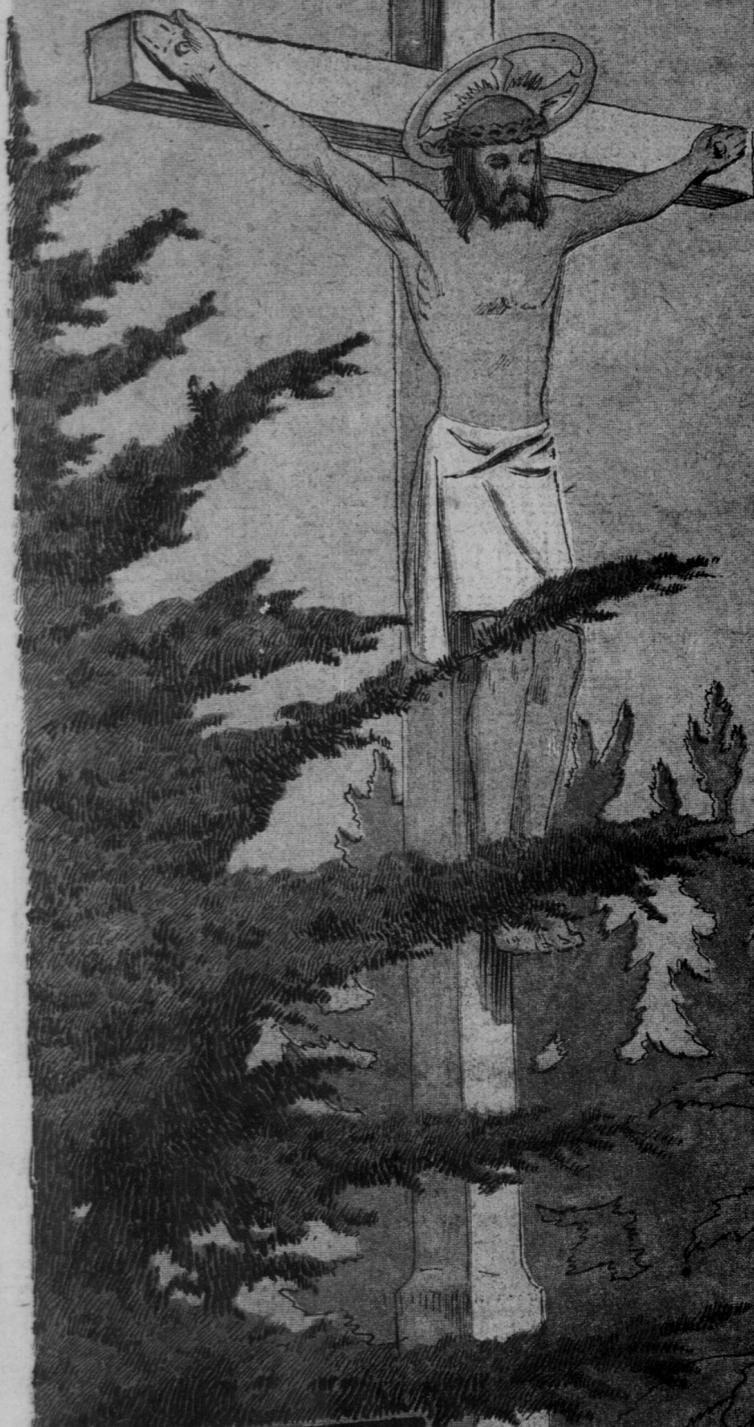


Nine in a Grave Sleep the 5000 Dead of Santa Barbara Mission



A CORNER OF THE GRAVEYARD OF SANTA BARBARA MISSION



IN THE MISSION GARDEN

There are no burials now in this cemetery. It is only a place of interest, romantic and loving interest, to those who hear the voices of the California that is past; just curious interest to the thousands of tourists whose

burying feet trample the earth above the people of another time, people who were as peaceful in their lives as they are in death, who loved and wove the romance of the West before the Gringo came.

Now and then a tourist shudders when told that five thousand listen there below to hear his tread.

"God's Acre"

The acre is inclosed upon two sides by high stone walls, and upon the third by the massive walls of the old mission church. High over the five thousand looms a beautiful arched bell tower from which, a hundred years ago, the bells tolled the knells of those who lie beneath their shadows. The bells still toll, but not for those who are to rest beneath them. For the five thousand are to be through all eternity the only tenants of their crowded place of rest. Their number is complete. Not one is to be added to the tale. Touching elbows they must lie, while smoke of incense curls from the deep-set windows of the church beside them and gently floats across their

acre. The famous "Portal of the Three Skulls" leads from church to cemetery. It is one of California's ancient treasures. Built in the side of the Mission Church, it leads through a wall six feet thick. The doors are of heavy pine, hewn in the days when Santa Barbara was an Indian village, and when neophytes did the bidding of the missionary padres from ancient Spain. Into the solid rock above the door two skulls were set by the pious builders, and there, to this day, they grin their message to the living, warning the hurrying throng that it may not always hurry, but one day turn to dust, even as turned those two who are nameless. Set above these is the carved stone image of a skull, a message of a century gone by to the living of all time, for this is a wall that must endure, so staunchly did those early heroes of the church build churches to save the souls of Indians.

Beneath this famous portal stood President McKinley and John Hay, not long before the former was murdered and the latter passed away. One of the choicest possessions of the Mission Fathers is a large photograph of the President and his honored friend, at the Portal of the Three Skulls. From the portal a red tile paved walk a hundred years old winds through the flower beds. The cemetery has bright colors that catch the eye. Vivid geraniums bloom forever in this acre. High overhead are the broad leaves of banana trees, with clustered fruit hanging half-ripe. There are roses and flowering vines, and along an outer wall is a long avenue of cypress trees, beneath which monks of the mission, padres grown old in the service of God, and young students just donning the robes of holy orders, walk to and fro, reading their breviaries. Novices about to be ordained to the holy calling of the priesthood here meditate upon the solemnity of the vows they are to take, and from this cypress walk, on feast days, fraters of the Order of Franciscan Monks may be watched, culling roses or gathering snow-white lilies to garnish the high altar of the church or the shrines of saints.

Here and there fraters care for the trees or shrubs are planted or removed, the bones of human beings are turned up by the spadex. Hamlet's diggers might have found much to think upon besides poor Yorick's skull had they dug poor Ophelia's grave in the well-populated city of the dead. But here Hamlet's fear that "the rest is silence" gives place to hope and trust in whose thoughts are turned toward the end of human life.

Where Each Awaits His Hour For the religious community of the Mission there is a constant reminder in this acre of the mutability of human existence. For each priest of the Mission there is a grave reserved in the churchyard. In an angle of the outer wall, where nearby mountains al-

most cast their shadows upon the flowers, there stands a little, modern stone house of the dead. Its foundations pierce many an ancient grave. It is a vault into which members of the order are carried when their hours are come. For each of those now at the Mission there is a place, and of those who built the vault there are already many in the narrow homes selected for them ere they passed away. The living may read the epitaphs of dead companions, may see the places they themselves shall fill when death has laid them low.

Along the high church walls lie many buried in stone vaults. These places were given in the days gone by to men and women whose grandchildren still pray at the doors of their tombs. These were hidalgos and grantees and benefactors of the church. One of the early bishops of the church lies here. His bishop's hat hangs at the door of his resting place. Beneath the church, beside the cemetery, are the tombs of early fathers and of the rich and powerful of a hundred years ago. Here and there in the cemetery are stone vaults rising amid the flowers from the realm of death. The occupants were of the day when Spanish was the language of Santa Barbara and California. The latest headboard in the acre marks the resting place of a sailor of the United States navy. While his frigate was in Santa Barbara harbor he sickened and died and was buried at the Mission. Three tears are painted upon the white cross that lives to his memory. There is no name upon the cross. Old priests remember the funeral of the boy in the blue jacket.

Upon other crosses there are many names familiar in California. Members of the old Spanish families are buried here. Often one, old and deep wrinkled, may be seen kneeling at the tomb of some one who was dear half a century ago. The feast of Corpus Christi is the glory of the little churchyard. That day's celebration is the most beautiful service of the church. Costly laces and cloth of gold decorate the shrines of saints. Candles burn upon them. The priests, in a stately procession, visit each shrine in turn. A beautiful silken canopy, carried by white robed acolytes, waves above the priests. The silent congregation follows, awed to prayer by the beauty of the scene in the place of many dead.

The massive walls of the church are overgrown with moss. Deep red of the stains of many winters are upon the stones, giving a glint to the color of the moss. The shrines, built into the cemetery from the church, and the row of tombs, lend mystery to the sight. Artists delight to paint the colors of this ancient wall. Near the bell tower there is a weeping willow tree, sign of the churchyard. Its drooping branches cover the resting places of hundreds of the dead. But dominating the whole acre stands the figure of the cross. It is a costly tribute to the memory of the crucified Savior, to whose bosom have flown the Five Thousand. It is the work of an Italian artist who gave it beauty, not knowing that through the years it should stand silent in this place of the dead, serene and promising mercy to all who tread, no matter how carelessly, over the heads of those who lie beneath its shadow. Calm and forceful is the face of the image. There is pity there also, and love. Priests reverently cross themselves as they pass the foot of the cross. They murmur prayers as the Savior looks down upon them, speaking no word, but looking into their hearts and blessing them as they tell their beads. And this little acre is the Kingdom of the Five Thousand. They need fear no intruders. Their acre is forever their own. They outnumber any army of the living that might choose to stand above their heads. Of the living, 5000 could not crowd into a space so narrow. But the dead care not who comes or goes above them. One may come, or 5000, the Five Thousand are at rest. Nothing shall disturb them. Shoulder to shoulder they are there to hold their ground. Who shall dispute them sole possession?



RESIDENT MCKINLEY AND SECRETARY HAY JULY 21 THE PORTAL OF THE THREE SKULLS

By Adeline Robinson

N A tier of nine corpses would you rather be the top or the bottom object?

Had you been buried one hundred years ago in the cemetery of the Santa Barbara Mission you might have been at the bottom of the tier. Had, however, your funeral taken place only thirty or forty years ago you might today enjoy the distinction of a headstone in this unusual city of the dead, for you might have been at the top of the tier where all posterity might read your epitaph. There are but few monuments in this cemetery, and they are for the comparatively modern dead. Beneath lie nameless underlings, forgotten and forlorn, unidentified.

that the buried lie in rows and layers, tier upon tier.

It is estimated that in this place of the dead the skeletons lie in their graveyard nine deep.

The little churchyard is the quaintest thing in California. It is a thing of the past. Like a corner of Italy is this acre of the departed. And when at various festivals the monks of the old mission set up shrines to the saints and march into the graveyard, chanting their prayers, the sight is one not to be met with elsewhere in America.

There are five thousand people buried in this churchyard, and the churchyard is not a whole acre in extent. But one conclusion can be drawn, the very fact,