

# THE CRAFTSMAN

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## THE FRANCISCAN MISSION BUILDINGS OF CALIFORNIA. BY GEORGE WHARTON JAMES

The article now offered upon the Missions of California, is one of a series to be written for *The Craftsman* by Mr. George Wharton James. This writer purposed at first to confine himself to the subject of the present article, but in consequence of the rapid rise of his enthusiasm, he decided to extend his limits to include the Missions of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. For nearly twenty years, Mr. James has been a student of these localities, but during the publication of his papers, he will revisit them in order that no detail of general or specific importance be omitted from his work.

The second article, to appear in the February issue of the magazine, will, of necessity, attract a wide circle of readers, both lay and professional, since it will treat:

"The Influence of the Mission Style upon the Modern Civic and Domestic Architecture of California."

**M**ANY and diverse are the elements which have gone into the making of that "State of the Golden Gate" of which Americans generally are so proud. It has been the stage upon which strangely different actors have played their part—important or insignificant—and left their impress where they played. It has been a composite canvas upon which painters of every school have

practised their art: a vivid mass of color here, a touch there, a single stroke of the brush yonder. Then, too, look at it as you will, stage or canvas, it had a marvellous natural setting. Curtains, side-wings, drops, scenes, accessories, suitable for every play, adequate for every requirement. Tragedy? Great mountains, awful snow storms, trackless sand-wastes, fearful deserts, limitless canyons, more ocean line than any other of the North American States, and the densest forests. Comedy? Semi-tropical verdure, orange blossoms, carpets of flowers, delicate waterfalls, the singing of a thousand varieties of birds, the gentlest zephyrs, the bluest of blue skies. What wonder, then, as its history is studied, as a whole or in parts, that it is unusually fascinating, and that it presents features of unique interest?

The country itself and its aboriginal population were long a source of attraction to the Spanish conquerors of the New World. Cabrillo and Viscaïno had sailed up its coast; Alarcon up its gulf and strange Eastern river, now known as the Colorado, and, just about the time the birth agony of a new country was beginning on the Western shores of the Atlantic, events were shaping on the Eastern shores of the Pacific which were materially to affect the ultimate destiny of the as yet unborn nation. It is well to remember these two simultaneous spheres of activity: each working unknown to the other, and separated by a vast continent which was eventually to be one undivided country: great battlefields, pregnant