HOW often we hear the expression: “He builded better than he knew!” Never was it used more truthfully than when applied to the Fathers Junipero Serra, Crespi, Lasuen, and their co-workers, who erected the mission structures of California.

The Spaniards were a remarkable people. Whatever we may think of the modern Spaniard, in our present day pride, we cannot deny his great virility, bravery, and the extent of his explorations in earlier centuries. Then, too, is it not a remarkable fact that he stamped his language and much of his religion upon the aborigines of the two great halves of the American Continent; that the architecture he used for his churches in North America is largely influencing much of the best domestic, civic and religious architecture of modern California, with its population of wealthy, progressive, somewhat arrogant, and certainly self-centered citizenship?

It would be an interesting and fascinating search to investigate the influences which led to the building of the Mission structures of California. They are original buildings: no one can say that they are copies. Certainly they have points in common with other architectural expressions, yet they are originals, clear, distinctive and vivid.

Undoubtedly, the source of their inspiration was Spanish, and in some later publication, it will be my pleasure to give an analytical survey of all the historic churches of Spain and Mexico, which may have influenced Serra and his coadjutors.

Yet it is evident that in California the Mission architects were largely controlled by conditions of environment, the impor-
tance of which cannot be overestimated; yet I am not aware that any writer has presented this phase of the subject.

It is necessary to place ourselves in the exact situation of the Fathers in order to understand the difficulties which they overcame and the grandeur of their accomplishments. They were in a strange land; they had no forges or foundries, no manufactories of tools, no skilled laborers, no base of supplies, no stone-masons, brick-makers, or brick-layers, no experts to judge of the qualities and strength of clays or stone. There were priests and soldiers on the one hand; savage Indians on the other. Thus surrounded by hindrances, they were obliged to meet all emergencies with great promptness and decision. There was nothing to rely upon but the intelligence and the energy of the directing priests.

From this point of view, is it not surprising that these priests invented a style of architecture which is a most important factor in the modern buildings of American California? Such a result was accom-

Figure II. The Campanile, Glenwood Hotel, Riverside, California

plished by nothing short of genius. It is no small thing to produce a style of architecture, or so to modify an existing style as to institute an art-epoch. With all our art training, our versatility, our comprehensive study of the styles of antiquity and of later days, we have not yet invented the one or modified the other. Yet these priests, supposedly expert in theology only, two thou-
sand miles distant from all sources of architectural inspiration, away from tools and factories, with the crudest means of transportation, without skilled master-artisans, assisted by a few professional architects and a few indifferent individuals of their own race, were able by means of crude, aboriginal labor to accomplish this great result. In a short time, order was evolved from chaos. Untamed Indians were brought under subjection, and became blacksmiths, tailors, silversmiths, candlemakers, copper-smiths, ropemakers, painters, sculptors, masons, stonecutters, weavers, tilemakers, embroiderers, carpenters, as well as competent laborers in many other fields.

Let the man of honor and thought ask himself if these achievements are not astonishing. Their very audacity is sublime. It is Prometheus again daring the gods and stealing their protected and cherished fire. Serra must have heard the very voice of God in his call, and his co-workers and followers were equally confident, or they never could have dared cast themselves, a mere handful, into that vast horde of savage humanity, with the assurance that they could tame, subjugate, and speedily convert the primitive natures to whom they addressed themselves. To Serra the very warmth of God’s benignant hand must have been a reality; the very shadow of His protecting wing a daily and nightly fact for which to be grateful. How else can we account for his courage and fearlessness? Before such heroes and achievements ordinary men must feel their littleness. The scoffers at the Mission Fathers would do well to consider the dignity, grace and fitness of the buildings erected by them, before they proceed to characterize such artists and artisans as narrow-minded, non-productive, idle and perverted.

No honest man can look, as he must, with awakened eye and quickened perception, upon these noble buildings, and not feel profound admiration and esteem for the men who reared them. And the very fact that these buildings are now the objects of deep study and admiration on the part of persons wholly separate from the race and traditions of their founders, proves their high artistic and structural value, some portion of which I shall show, by noting examples of modern Californian architecture which have borrowed their distinctive features.

In a former article I endeavored to present a few of the distinctive features of the old Mission buildings. It is my purpose here to fulfil the promise of the lengthy title affixed to the head of these observations.

The architecture of the Fathers was generally very simple. Owing to the adverse conditions prevailing in the new land, this characteristic was enforced. The Missions

![Figure III. The Colonnade, Glenwood Hotel, Riverside, California](image-url)
were built for the use of uncivilized Indians. Therefore it was not fitting for them to be so ornate as the churches already erected in Mexico. Necessity largely influenced the creation of this distinctive Mission style, and it is a matter of congratulation for us that the Fathers were so influenced. Had they erected buildings similar to those of Mexico, the model, the inspiration, for our contemporary architects would have been wanting. The very elaborateness of these churches and monasteries would have precluded them from suggesting designs adapted to modern purposes.

The philosopher, Joseph Le Conte, once expressed a thought which here applies with force: "That only is good which can be seen again and again with increasing pleasure."

We may adapt this thought to our present subject by saying that while fanciful and florid architecture may captivate for the moment by its audacity, it soon becomes fatiguing: producing in the spectator a longing for the simple, the chaste and the severe.

Therefore, to these Franciscan Fathers we owe a debt of gratitude for their contribution to our education in the building art. Jules Huret, the famous French journalist and dramatic critic, who recently visited California, thus wrote, in the Paris Figaro, regarding the architecture of Southern California: "Los Angeles is the first place in America where I have found original architecture. Not only does the style differ from any I have seen up to this time, but the buildings are of an adorable taste,—ingen-
ious and varied as Nature herself, graceful, elegant, appropriate and engaging. Many of the houses are in the style of the Spanish Renaissance—‘Mission style,’—with almost flat roofs of red tiles, little round towers surmounted by Spanish-Moorish domes, and arcaded galleries, like the Franciscan cloisters of the past century. Others mingle the Colonial with the Mexican style, imitating the coarser construction of the adobe. All are very attractive and possessed of individuality."

One of the earliest to see and appreciate the possibilities of the Mission style was Mr. Lester S. Moore, of Los Angeles, who is still a young man. A native of Topeka, Kansas, he went to the former city seventeen years ago, and was immediately attracted to the Franciscan structures. First of all their simple dignity appealed to him. He had already chosen his profession, and had clear ideals. These, on the one hand, demanded release from the old, over-decorated, conventional styles; and, on the other, a return to the simple, the natural, the harmonious.

The very poverty of the Mission Fathers was now to reap its own reward. Poverty had demanded simplicity from them, and for a hundred years their buildings remained practically unknown to the outside world, and but little appreciated in their own region. The disciples of new and better structural methods appreciated, at first sight, the graceful, dignified lines of the half-ruined masonry. Low roofs, red-tiled, with broad-reaching or widely-projecting eaves, gave shelter from the direct rays of the sun; while thick walls excluded both heat and cold; the color scheme, consisting of a buff, toned to harmonize with the luxuriant abundance of the surrounding foliage, produced a unified whole which made the buildings a part of Nature herself.

Here then was the true model ready at hand. The mine of new wealth was discovered; the one necessity for the miner was to have the faith of his own conviction and to show to the world the value of the new riches.

Mr. Moore began his work at nearly the

Figure V. Residence of Robert M. Bulla, Los Angeles

Figure VI. Patio of Mr. Bulla’s residence, Los Angeles
measuring, studying, analyzing, "platting" and mentally reconstructing them.

A second of these architects was Arthur B. Benton, of Los Angeles; still another, William H. Weeks, of Watsonville. Specimens of the buildings erected by each of these three men are here presented.

The term, "The Mission Style," although widely used, is somewhat narrow and misleading. As we adapt it to modern buildings, we extend it so as to include certain features of Mexican domestic architecture. In a personal letter, Mr. Weeks has clearly outlined some of the ideas and motives which led to his use of Mission principles. He says:

"Among the principal features of this style are the following: a typical ground plan consisting of a series of low, massive, light colored buildings, with tiled roofs (red), ranged round a quadrangle or court; a small court at the outer entrance being a characteristic addition, and many of the large Mission houses having the patio or inner court; there are further the low, broad arches—usually grouped—the tiled roofs, with wide overhanging cornices, showing heavy bracket effects, the carved scrolls of the gables and pediments, the plain stucco of the walls, with an absence of lines or joints such as are ordinarily seen in brick or stone work. The old Mission style is simple, solid and massive, but in cases where the Moorish has crept in, the tendency toward frailty often appears.

"With the belief that the old Mission style of building is most appropriate for a certain class of representative California buildings, and that domestic architecture should be the natural outgrowth of the character of a people, of the institutions, customs and habits of a region, modified by climate and scenery, I have adopted this style from preference, and have only begun to acknowledge its possibilities for our architecture, which may be realized by developing the beauty suggested in the old Mission lines, made more ornate by a slight touch of the Moorish.

"All my buildings of the old Mission type I have endeavored to make express their purpose and use, and not to lose sight of the fitness of things by such vagaries as erecting a Mission tower on a distinctly commercial building, or by placing the cross and niches for bells on non-religious edifices: parts which give the proper significance to the old Mission church."

The story of the origin of the red tiles in California Mission architecture is of decided interest. The original structures erected by the Fathers were roofed with poles and tules. Occasionally, the Indians became refractory and had to be punished. Such discipline made them angry and led them to run away from the Fathers' control. On their arrival at their old homes, or at secret haunts in the mountains, some of those disaffected would plan reprisals
Figure VIII. Residence of General Harrison Gray Otis, Los Angeles

J. P. Kremple, architect
upon the priests. Midnight attacks were not unfrequent, at times, and, in the early days, these were made in a desperate, blood-thirsty manner. Fighting with their primitive war-clubs, and bows and arrows, they used one of their own methods of warfare to attack the Missions. Attaching lighted torches to arrows, they shot the latter upon the inflammable materials of the roofs. Two or three Missions were thus destroyed by fire, and finally, in self-defence, the tiles were made and thereafter used as a safe and impervious roof covering.

Mr. Benton, who is a member of the American Institute of Architects and the Secretary of the Engineers and Architects’ Association of Southern California, is the author of several of the most striking specimens of the Mission style existing in that region. The principal of these is the Glenwood Hotel at Riverside, shown in Figures I, II and III. Here is a bold and striking adaptation of the original models, with innovations that are both fitting and effective. For instance, the main buildings, instead of presenting an outer façade, have their main entrance from the inner court, which is surrounded on but three sides. In other words, the patio is made an entrance court, thus excluding the façade from all outside influences. Comment upon the verdure of this patio is unnecessary, as it is understood that flowers, plants and shrubs are made to grow in every vacant space in this land of sunshine.

The patio has two interesting features. The first of these is the remnant of the old Glenwood Hotel, built of adobe: the roof of which is almost flat, and covered with the original tiles. The second is a campanile illustrated in Figure Two. This is a detached wall, pierced with six arches for bells, and with three others, much larger, rising from the ground level, to admit carriages and pedestrians. The campanile attains a further picturesqueness by its stepped and curved gable.

The feature of the arched colonnades is developed in several parts of the building, both out and inside, as will be seen from Figure III.

Riverside possesses another fine example of the Mission style in its Carnegie Library, as seen in Figure IV. Here are several distinctive features in most pleasing combina-
tion. These are the stepped and scrolled pediment, the semi-circular arches, the chamfered and pierced bell towers, crowned by semi-circular domes, which, in turn, are surmounted by the peculiar Mission "lantern." The continuous plastered effect, the color, and the red-tiled roof concur in a harmonious result.

Figure Five represents the house of ex-State Senator Robert N. Bulla, of Los Angeles. It was designed by Mr. Moore, and built in 1900; it contains twelve rooms and cost $12,000. This may be regarded as a type of simple Mission domestic architecture. It is of frame construction, sheathed and plastered on metal lath. The outside is painted in the "Mission buff" color. A newer method than painting is to mix the ground color pigment with plaster for the treatment of the exterior. Another method has recently been patented by Charles E. Richards, of Los Angeles, by which the pigment is mixed with the plaster and made perfectly waterproof. There are two styles of finish in the plaster: the rough and the smooth; the rough being generally preferred.

In the Bulla house the simple, chaste dignity of the Mission style is preserved in the interior as closely as in the exterior. It will be observed that, as in the Missions themselves, both semi-circular and elliptical arches are here used; the arches being of different widths and thus offering a pleasing variation. The roofing is composed of burned red tiles, made after old models and costing, when laid, about $25.00 per square of one hundred feet.

The driveway is composed of three sets of three elliptical arches. In the rear of the building is the patio (Figure VI), with eight semi-circular arches. This last might be classed as an out-of-door sitting room.
MISSION ARCHITECTURE

It opens from the living room and from Senator Bulla’s “den,” and is made agreeable and homelike with swinging hammocks, palms, potted plants, birds in cages, etc.; while the open arches afford immediate outlook upon a charming flower garden reached by a short flight of steps.

Figure VII is introduced to show the adaptation of the Mission style to a simple cottage. This is the Consuelo residence in Los Angeles. The house is of one story and contains seven rooms. It was built at a cost of $2,000. Although the roof is shingled, the tiling of the hips and ridges, the broad overhanging eaves, together with the three semi-circular arches, give it a decided and pleasing Mission effect.

Of an entirely different character is the ornate residence of Brigadier-General Harrison Gray Otis, also at Los Angeles. It was built after the designs of Mr. J. P. Kremple, and shows the stepped pediment, semi-circular and elliptical arches, red tiled pyramidal roof, somewhat similar to that of San Carlos at Monterey, and an adaptation of the “lantern” as a chimney decoration (Figure VIII).

Another of Mr. Benton’s buildings is shown (Figure IX) in the Woman’s Club House, at Los Angeles. Here is the buff plastered exterior, the arched colonnade, the stepped pediment, pierced for bells, and the red-tiled roof.

It may be well to note in this place a criticism suggested by Mr. Weeks’s remarks. It will be remembered that he said: “All my buildings of the old Mission type I have endeavored to make express their purpose, and not to lose sight of the fitness of things by such vagaries as erecting a mission tower on a distinctly commercial building, or by placing the cross and niches for bells, on non-religious edifices.” This, of course, is a point of taste which must be left to the preference of the architect and his employer. But there is little doubt, in my mind, of the strict justness of Mr. Weeks’s criticism, if a pure style is to be maintained.

At Ventura we find the dignified, simple structure shown in Figure X. This is the Elizabeth Bard Memorial Hospital, which was erected a short time since by Thomas Bard, United States Senator from California. Here the continuous plastered surface, the red tiled roof, the pierced bell tower, the Mission pediment, and the semi-circular arches are the distinct features; while a slight touch of added Mission effect is produced by the somewhat insignificant buttresses, crowned with red tiles.

In the Harvard School at Los Angeles (Figure XI), the arched colonnade, the red-tiled roof and the Mission pediment have been used by Mr. Benton with pleasing effect. Here, however, we discover slight modifications produced by the introduction of Moorish details.

Figure XII represents one of the earliest domestic buildings erected at Pasadena in the Mission style; the architect being Mr.
T. W. Parkes, with whom Mr. Moore was at that time engaged. Built nearly nine years ago, at a cost of $5,000, it originally contained eleven rooms, with a hall and a bath room. A short time since, three more rooms were added at an additional cost of $8,000. The house was early christened "The Arches," and is owned by Mrs. Meeker.

Another adaptation of the Mission style is seen in the "Curio" building (Figure XIII), at Phoenix, Arizona. Desirous of owning a shop suited to their Indian basket and curio trade, Messrs. Benham & Brizard themselves designed this little structure, which they erected at an approximate cost of $4,000. From its completion, it has been a source of attraction to all visitors at Phoenix, and is a most pleasing and useful adaptation of the Mission style.

Two of the most important buildings designed by Mr. Weeks are shown in Figure XIV. These are the State Polytechnic School at San Luis Obispo. When the plans for this institution shall be completely carried out, there will be twelve buildings, with arcades and quadrangle. Their estimated cost will be a half million dollars. Upon this work Mr. Weeks has devoted much time and thought, producing results which are simple, dignified and altogether
admirable. The main building of Figure XIV is forty-seven by one hundred feet, while the dormitory to the right is forty by one hundred feet. They were begun on January 1, 1903, and completed November 1.

Figure XV is a sketch, planned by Mr. Moore, of a proposed public library; while Figure XVI is a design which the same architect submitted in a competition for the Riverside County Court House. The latter is the most effective modern design in Mission style that I have ever examined. The semi-circular and elliptical arches, the continuous plaster treatment, the heavy walls, the Mission pediment, the pierced bell tower, the egg-shaped dome, surmounted by a “lantern,” and the red-tiled roofs, produce a combination faithfully representative, and yet admirably suited to modern purposes. Were I called upon to-day to erect a build-

ing of this nature, I should accept this plan of Mr. Moore’s, with but one or two minor modifications.

Thus, in a somewhat cursory manner, I have introduced the general reader to a style of architecture already securely domiciled in California. It has long passed the experimental stage. M. Huret’s comments express the opinions of many thousand visitors who come annually to Southern California, to be captivated not alone with its climate and flowers, but also with its charming houses. It must be confessed, however, that such a climate and such surroundings are needed, in order to justify such an architecture. In a cold region of gray skies, it would be out of place. So we are content that this Mission style should be regarded as a distinctive possession of that earthly paradise of which Californians are so justly proud.