

THE MEXICAN ERA

1821 - 1846

COMMERCE BEGETS A NEW ARCHITECTURE

ON SEPTEMBER 27, 1821, after ten years of bloody insurrection, Mexico achieved independence from Spain, annexing California as a part of the new republic. For nearly ten years California had been left to shift for herself; her people would hardly have known that a struggle was in progress, so removed were they from the tumult of battle. For ten years not a single government transport came to the presidios with supplies, and for ten years not a penny was paid to the soldiers, who went bootless, their uniforms in tatters. The burden of feeding the garrisons of California's four presidios fell upon the overworked mission fathers.

For the most part, the Californios accepted their new flag with apathy. Only the mission fathers, who were among the very few settlers who had been born in Spain, seemed to care one way or another. Perhaps they also had a premonition of the fate which was in store for the mission system. The official enactment of the Mexican Congress which placed the mission properties in secular hands and reduced the missionary fathers to the status of parish priests was not to occur for fourteen years, yet almost from the start Mexico's official acts would radically alter California's social and economic status.