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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Seven Golden Cities.* By Mabel Farnum. (The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wis. 225 pp. \$2.75)

The writing of historical fiction is not a new art. It has gained fame for quite a few authors and occasionally fortune, such for instance as came to General Lew Wallace with his *Ben Hur, the Tale of the Christ*. The annals of New Mexico is a mine of great wealth for writers of books who take the dry bones of historical fact and using their imagination and knowledge of collateral happenings clothe them with sinew and breathe the breath of life into them.

The author of *The Seven Golden Cities* has for her main theme the colorful part played by Fray Marcos de Niza in the earliest explorations of the Spanish Southwest and especially his quest for the fabled realm of Cíbola which terminated at the pueblos of Hawikúh and Zuñi. "The purpose of *The Seven Golden Cities* is to make known and revered a Franciscan herald and pioneer of four centuries ago," writes Miss Farnum, "whose heroic sacrifices formed the first link in a missionary chain extending to our day; also to promote the noble cause of the missions to the Indians, the first Americans, who, when they receive the light of faith, make fervent converts and exemplary children of the Church." However, there are other historic figures, such as Coronado, Mendoza and Estevan, the grotesque colored man, who pass in review and add their glamor to the tale. The author relies upon acknowledged authorities for the history, archaeology and ethnology of the Spanish Southwest for the facts around which she weaves her interesting narrative. She writes for instance, in her acknowledgment of these authorities; "Professor Lansing B. Bloom, University of New Mexico, whose generous interest in this book was climaxed during a visit of the author to his 'workshop' at Albuquerque, when I was privileged to examine precious documents dealing with Fray Marcos de Niza, brought by Professor Bloom from Spain." Her diligence in acquainting herself with the

historical, ethnological, and geographical background has enabled her to produce a work that is not only good reading but also excellent presentation of New Mexico history.

The book is one of "The Science and Culture Series" of which the Rev. Joseph Husslein, S. J., is the editor. Miss Farnum is also the author of *Street of the Half Moon*, dealing with the Spanish Conquest and one of its heroic figures, St. Peter Calver, apostle to the slaves of Cartagena. Both of her books are worthy of a place in every public school and home library.—P. A. F. W .

*Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936, Vol. V: The End of the Spanish Regime, 1780-1810.* By Carlos E. Castañeda. (Austin, 1942; 514 pp. illus. and maps. bibliog., index. \$5.00.)

As projected by Dr. Castañeda, two volumes are yet to appear for the completing of this series. The present volume is the fifth and last portraying "The Mission Era" of Texan history. For reviews of the preceding volumes, the reader is referred to volumes XI, XIII, and XV of this quarterly.

This volume, as the earlier ones, has been drawn from a very considerable range of source material, as will be evident after a glance through the bibliography. Dr. Castañeda may, indeed, have used more sources than are there listed, for we find (p. 151) casual mention of photostat copies which he borrowed from the Coronado Library at the University of New Mexico—not otherwise acknowledged.

In the brief preface, there are several statements by the author which seem open to question. Had not Texas always been an "interior province" in an administrative sense? The creating of the General Commandancy was simply bringing the administration closer to these northern provinces. And then for Dr. Castañeda to say that this change "resulted" in the abandoning of the mission as a frontier institution is a *non sequitur*,—which is repeated in a variant form in the opening paragraph of his first chapter. There we are told that the northern tribes "could no longer be con-

trolled" by the mission, whereas Texan history does not show that those tribes ever had been so controlled. As for the natives who, as neophytes, constituted the various Texan missions, missionary discipline and training for ten years were expected to be adequate in preparing them for secularization; and if, after seventy years, they were still inept "children," is the cause to be found merely in an administrative reorganization or was it more probably intrinsic in the mission system itself?

In this connection, we question the opening sentence in Dr. Castañeda's portrayal of "secularization" (Chapter II). Was it true that Spanish officials had long been contemplating "drastic changes in the mission system of New Spain?" In the author's discussion which follows, lay readers, and especially those who are not Roman Catholics, are apt to think that secularization was little else than a destruction of the missions through the distributing of their holdings among the neophytes. But in simplest words, what actually was being attempted was to change the missions into self-supporting parishes—a transition within the Church corresponding to that in an individual from childhood to manhood. Parish priests (under their respective bishop) would take charge, and the Franciscan padres would be released for pioneering work in new fields.

Another question is raised by the author's preface, in his statement as to "steps taken to blast trails between Texas and New Mexico which eventually were to lead enterprising American pioneers to the gates of Santa Fé." It is not clear what this means unless Dr. Castañeda is trying to claim for Texas the credit for having opened the Santa Fé Trail—from Missouri. There is nothing to substantiate such a view in his chapter on "Communications between Santa Fé and San Antonio"; and indeed, after Pedro Vial's initial journey from San Antonio to Santa Fé in 1786, all of his activities centered in New Mexico rather than Texas.

Probably the general reader will find especially interesting the last chapters, beginning with "First Clashes [in Texas] with the United States." At page 280, however, Dr. Castañeda seems quite unfamiliar with the vigorous and successful rebuttal of Pike's critics by the late Dr. A. B. Hulbert in his *Zeb Pike's Arkansaw Journal* (1932), 170-175.—L. B. B.

*Education in Spanish North America during the 16th Century.* By Francis Borgia Steck, O. F. M. 40 pp., bibliog., \$0.25.

Those interested in the beginnings of educational work in Spanish America will welcome the ably presented and well documented survey which is available in this reprint from the *The Catholic Educational Review*. Dr. Steck is an associate professor at the Catholic University in Washington.—L. B. B.