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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

*Of the Night Wind's Telling; Legends from the Valley of Mexico.* By E. Adams Davis (with drawings by Dorothy Kirk). (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1946. Pp. xxiv, 276; illustrated, bibliography, index). \$3.00.

Mexico is rich in traditional lore. The Aztecs and the Toltecs had innumerable legends; the Spaniards imported their own by the additional thousand, and these were built atop the legends of the Indians as the Christian church was built atop the pyramid temple of Huitzilopochtli, the bloody war god of the Aztecs. Elements of the two mythologies eventually became fused. The result is a paradise for the folklorist.

The present volume is a selection of these legends from merely Mexico City and the region round about. The three main sections of Professor Davis' work are (a) the Valley of Anahuac, (b) the City of Mexico, and (c) the Valley of Mexico. The first relates legends of the Indian precursors of the Spaniards—Valley of Anahuac being the Indian designation of what is now called the Valley of Mexico.

Perhaps there is no better way of learning the social and religious attitudes of a people than to read their folklore. Certainly there are few methods that are more interesting. The author, a teacher in Louisiana State University, has carefully recorded and translated the legends he has selected. Frequently he employs the straight narrative method; occasionally he uses the words and the mannerisms of the Mexican informant, thereby achieving an added interest and an increased sense of the "legitimacy" of the legend.

The tale, "The Four Destructions of the World," affords the reader an insight into the religious beliefs of the aboriginal Mexicans. "The Energetic Lover" relates the story of the prodigious physical effort that a Spanish young man was constrained to put forth in order to win the hand of his beloved at a time when "for a young lady to have a mind was rare indeed" (p. 82). From "La Casa de Los Azulejos," the tourist will learn some interesting beliefs concerning the

history of the most famous colonial building still standing in Mexico City. "The Phantom Guard" is a case of miraculous teletransportation, the guard in question having been almost instantly snatched from Manila, in the Philippines, and put down in the streets of Mexico City. So exceedingly obliging was "The Obedient Nun" that when, after her death, it was found that her body was too long for the only available coffin, she promptly shortened herself by several inches on being ordered by her abbess to do so!

Professor Davis has, it is clear, had a wonderful time in collecting these stories and has done an excellent work in putting them in their present form. The folklorist will welcome the volume and the general reader will be entertained in reading it. The advocate of "good neighborliness" will be delighted that another volume has been presented to the public to further mutual understanding between North Americans and Mexicans.

WATT STEWART.

New York State College for Teachers,  
Albany.

*Maverick Town—The Story of Old Tascosa.* By John L. McCarty (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1946. Pp. 277). \$3.00.

This ghost town of the old west grew up where the buffalo had found an easy crossing of the Canadian river. Thither came hunters—both Indian and white—and traders from New Mexico interested in livestock and goods stolen from Texas settlers. When the buffalo had been largely killed and the Indians placed on reservations, sheepmen from New Mexico grazed their flocks into the Texas Panhandle and established Tascosa and other settlements on the river. Later the free grass also attracted large cattlemen and a conflict ensued in which two of New Mexico's most colorful outlaws—Sostenes l' Archevêque and Billy the Kid took part. Tascosa was a settlement of "little men" who thrived when mavericking was a common practice of the open range. The cowboy's strike failed, however, and the rancher began to blacklist employees who ran cattle of

their own. The big ranchers used Pat Garrett first to eliminate Billy the Kid in New Mexico and later to organize the Home Rangers in the Panhandle. Many said that the Rangers were primarily to run the little man out and help the big outfits gain possession of the open range. Incidents such as the "Big Fight" of 1886 might easily have led to a war more deadly than that associated with Lincoln County.

Meanwhile Oldham County had been organized in 1880 and Tascosa became the county seat. It was also the judicial center for nine other counties and the supply center for the big ranchers of the Panhandle. Although it was a town of the "little men," it aspired to leadership in a large region. *The Tascosa Pioneer* (founded in 1886) realized that the town faced boom or decline. Optimistically Editor Raymond predicted that the old town would become "the Queen City of the Panhandle." Again and again he enumerated its advantages, together with the latest rumors as to the coming of a railroad. Many factors, however, contributed to the doom of Tascosa. The railroad passed it up and created new rivals in Amarillo and Dalhart. The great ranchers built barbed wire fences across its trails and literally fenced it in. One big ranchman had sworn he would ruin Tascosa as a town, because of the higher taxes made necessary by the wagon bridge across the Canadian. Texas tick fever and drouth brought more trouble and less employment and much of the town was swept away by a great flood in 1893. More and more of the townsmen moved away.

The book is based on adequate research and has a good style. The author, a newspaper man of Amarillo, shows both enthusiasm and understanding; interesting light is thrown on various aspects of the cattle industry, the relations between New Mexico and Texas, the struggle for decency, etc. A number of good stories and photographs, as well as chapter decorations by Harold D. Buglibee, add much to the interest and pleasure of the reader. The press has done an excellent job in producing the book.

MARION DARGAN.

University of New Mexico.

*Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*  
Published Quarterly by Henry Schuman, New York  
Vol. I, No. 1 (January, 1946)

This Journal is a welcome addition in the field of the History of Medicine; a phase of medicine that has been relatively neglected for a good many years. As in so many sciences much of our present knowledge of diagnosis and treatment is the cumulative effect of the trials and errors in medicine of preceding generations. Much of the future in medicine relates to the history of development in preceding years and as the editor, George Rosen, aptly says, "What is past, is prologue." Of special interest is the article by Josiah Charles Trent from the Department of Thoracic Surgery, University of Michigan Hospital on the London Years of Benjamin Waterhouse. Waterhouse was the first Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine at the Harvard Medical School when it opened in 1783 and brought to American medicine the choicest medical knowledge of Europe. The consulting editors and contributors are men and women of high standing nationally and internationally in the field of medical history and research.

J. E. J. HARRIS, M. D.

University of New Mexico