

4-1-1956

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Recommended Citation

Reeve, Frank D.. "A Letter to Clio." *New Mexico Historical Review* 31, 2 (1956).
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol31/iss2/3>

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A LETTER TO CLIO

By FRANK D. REEVE

Dear Lady. Having a moment to spare, and being in a mood to write, I shall address a few comments to you, long revered Goddess of History, on a recent offering by one of your disciples. It is entitled *Great River: The Rio Grande in North American History*. Written by Paul Horgan, a long time resident of Roswell, New Mexico, it was published in two volumes by Rinehart & Company, Inc., New York, in 1954.

Seven novels, four items classified as shorter fiction, and four more in history and belles-lettres have come from the same pen. They constitute an enviable record. But his latest work does not do justice to your Mystery, and thereby hangs a tale.

In the preface to *Great River*, Mr. Horgan informs the reader that he "wanted to produce a sense of historical experience, rather than a bare record. This required me wherever possible to see events, societies, movements, through human characters in action. Without, I hope, departing from the inflexible limits of respectful scholarship, I took every opportunity to stage a scene. . . . If here and there I halted the narrative of events to describe various ways and customs of the people, then I had precedent for it; for Herodotus did this, to our enrichment. Only when events are rooted in the soil of the culture might they seem to have true reality."

Mr. Horgan also found inspiration from other writers. One was "The Literary Historian" in the *London Times Literary Supplement* (January 16, 1953), who believes that "Macaulay wrote to stimulate the reader, not to contribute an original piece of research. He wrote, in fact, much as he talked. . . ."

From Aldous Huxley's *Vulgarity in Literature*, Mr. Horgan drew the reflection: "What is the smallest amount of simplification compatible with comprehensibility, compatible with the expression of a humanly significant meaning? It is the business of the non-classical naturalistic writer to dis-

cover. His ambition is to render, in literary terms, the quality of immediate experience. . . ." And from Eugène Delacroix in his *Journal* (July 21, 1850) : "The historian's task appears to me to be the most difficult of all because he needs to give unceasing attention to a hundred and one things at the same time, and must preserve through quotations, precise recitals of events, and facts that are only relatively important, the enthusiasm that gives life to his story and makes it something more than an extract from the newspapers. . . . We need to be very bold. Without daring, without extreme daring, even, there is no beauty. . . . (Translated by Lucy Norton, London, Phaidon Press, 1951)."

Finally, Mr. Horgan confesses that he agrees "with Professor Nevins that the writing of history, in addition to being a technical craft, is also an art. Its proper aim is to produce, in literary form, to whatever degree the author may command, a work of art."

Great River has received wonderful recognition. It is one of "35 books chosen by the American Library Assn., as the 'Notable Books of 1954.'" The author was awarded a Bancroft prize of \$2000 "for distinguished writing on American history," and received the Pulitzer Prize.

In arrangement, the first volume has a subtitle, "Indians and Spain." This in turn is subdivided into Prologue, River-scene; Book one, The Indian Rio Grande; Book Two, The Spanish Rio Grande. Under these headings are a total of forty-nine lesser subdivisions that can be called chapters. Volume two has a similar outline; it also contains a general bibliography. Both volumes have a list of sources for each chapter.

I hope, Mistress Clio, that you will not be too annoyed on learning that the author did not give footnote reference to specific books or pages, at least for quotations. As he writes: "I followed this course not because I did not have precise references for my facts, or because I did not want to share these with the reader; but because it seemed to me more to the reader's advantage to give him the story without diverting his interest to the anatomy of my framework. But of course I must identify my sources, under two obligations:

one is to acknowledge my debt to those authors whose works I have consulted; the other is to provide anyone interested in the source material—its range and authenticity—with general evidence for my statements” (p. ix).

I wish that he had been more interested in “anatomy.”

The critics have judged this publication with varying degrees of enthusiasm. E. W. Foell writes: “Mr. Horgan relishes every detail of his subject, but though this often enables him to sublimate the prosaic, it never forces him to drop the demands of objectivity . . . All of the peoples, as well as their country and river, are recreated with poetry and integrity in this wide-screen history of the Rio Grande.” (*The Christian Science Monitor*, October 14, 1954.)

The distinguished J. Frank Dobie thinks that “Some defects of the book are not as urbane as Mr. Horgan’s irony. The essay on cowboys is more belletristic than realistic. For some readers the long treatment of American pioneers will seem in places redundant and labored, in contrast to the subtle understanding of the reposeful Pueblos. . . . But a work that a fine writer, a gentleman of noble mind, and a painstaking scholar has taken thirteen years to write is not to be finally considered for flaws but for the bounty of life and beauty it holds.” (*New York Times*, October 10, 1954, in *Book Review Digest*).

Walter P. Webb comments: “His acquaintance with the sources, and with individuals along the river and away from it that know them, is amazing.” *** “I would not say in public that he has turned out the most comprehensive and adequate history of an American river, but I will say that he is as good as the best.” (*The Saturday Review*, October 16, 1954).

A fourth one believes that “The author, with many novels and histories of the Southwest to his credit, has released a monument to diligent, painstaking research that is as interesting as it is definitive. The at times almost poetic prose is a joy to read. Recommended for all college, university and large public libraries for circulating and reference collections.” (M. S. Bryan, *Library Journal*, 79:1498, quoted in *Book Review Digest*).

And Stanley Walker: "With the greatest reluctance, it must be argued that the Horgan book, although of high merit in many respects, need not be viewed with either awe or unqualified approbation. In the first place, there is the style. Some people will like it; others, with considerable evidence on their side, are bound to be confused and even embarrassed by its occasional lofty pretentiousness." (*The New Yorker*, December 4, 1954).

Oliver La Farge writes that "Great River is logically and interestingly organized. The writing is extraordinarily well sustained. Not only feeling for the subject and poetic gift but a real craftsman's technique, control and use of restraint are necessary to hold so high a level in a narrative of this length. There is a great deal to be explained, yet the explanations do not lag. Always the story moves." (*N. Y. Herald Tribune*, October 10, 1954, p. 1).

One more comment: "In a limpid, smoothly-flowing prose that approximates poetry an author identified with the southwestern U. S. traces the romantic, eventful history of the Rio Grande country. Volume one begins with the Valley inhabitants known only by the dwellings and objects they have left behind, and continues through the Indian and Spanish eras; volume two brings the account up to modern times, with the entrance of Mexico and the U. S. Twenty-page bibliography. A distinguished addition to U. S. history." (*The Booklist*, December 1, 1954, p. 149).

In a magazine (name unknown to me) advertisement by Rinehart & Company, the following comments are printed: "A masterpiece . . . a most remarkable literary achievement."—Tom Lea. "Fuses the imagination of a good novelist with a remarkable sense of a region's character."—*Time*. "The authoritative work on the subject for a long time to come."—Russell Davenport. "Monumental . . . a genuine event . . . A grand sweep of history."—Oliver LaFarge.

I suggest, Dear Lady, that you take some of the above with a grain of salt, especially the words "definitive" and "authoritative work." It is far from being either one.

The physical description of certain areas of the country wherein the story is laid confuses me. An initial statement,

for instance, referring to the whole length of the Rio Grande, so I judge, is as follows: "always visible on either side are reaches of desert . . ." (p. 5). This could not be literally true.

The localized area between the river and the mountains to the east of Albuquerque, a distance of about ten miles, is described as "a band of desert rising far away into a long range of blue mountains . . ." (pp. 113, 124). And yet I read farther on (in reference to this same area): "Cattle and sheep were grazed in the foothills rising away from the bottom lands . . ." (p. 353).

From the Pueblo of Isleta, about thirteen miles south of Albuquerque, travelers "turn west over the desert . . ." (p. 146), so Mr. Horgan writes. And again, "the rocky towns to the west, in the deserts, where Zuñi people lived" (p. 109). (The Zuñi people would not approve of this statement). "There were people always moving on the long trails that went from the western deserts to the eastern plains" (p. 110). And yet the text reads: "Beyond the mountains on each side of the cultivated valley lay immense empires of unworked soil" (p. 549).

Wondering what a desert is in the light of the above statements, I find that it is "a term for those lands which produce insufficient vegetation to support a human population" (*Britannica*, 14th ed.). Or, an unoccupied region—a deserted region. Arid region. Desert rainfall usually less than 10 inches (*Dictionary*). If population is the criterion, a population has lived in and around the Valley for countless generations, according to the story in *Great River*. If rainfall is the criterion, the average annual for New Mexico varies from about 10 inches to 25 inches. In the San Luis valley of south-central Colorado, where run the headwaters of the Rio Grande, the rainfall is about eight inches, possibly nine, and likewise in the lower part of the Valley in New Mexico. And yet *Great River* reads: "Even at its [Rio Grande] high sources the precipitation averages only five inches year-round" (p. 6). A single definition of a desert is not agreed upon among scholars, but aside from this the picture here presented involves too much literary license. As a setting for the story, it is not in harmony.

I might call to your attention also that the text does not reveal care in regard to streams. It states that the "major" tributaries of the Rio Grande in New Mexico are "the Red River, the Chama River, and four great draws that are generally dry except in storm . . . —Galisteo Creek, the Jemez River, Rio Puerco and Rio Salado" (p. 5) ; many pages later you will read that "In the canyon of the Rito de los Frijoles the river is an everflowing stream" (p. 20). This is another tributary between the Rio Chama and Rio Jemez. The Rio Jemez has been used for irrigation for centuries. It is not generally dry, except at the mouth. Taos Creek is marked on the map (p. 12), but is not mentioned in the text. Red River, mentioned in the text, is not marked on the map, nor is the Rito de los Frijoles.

The map draftsman was a bit careless about mapping the trail of Cabeza de Vaca. The author presents Mr. Hallenbeck's interpretation (a sound one) that this sixteenth century traveler moved westward from the Rio Grande valley at a point considerably north of El Paso, but the map (p. 82) marks his route as southwestward from El Paso in keeping with an earlier historical interpretation.

These few comments, Dear Lady, lead me to forewarn you that *Great River* is marred not only by a (1) carelessness of description, but also by (2) questionable statements of historical interpretation, (3) weakness in bibliography, (4) and errors of fact.

(1) For carelessness of description I submit a number of statements from the text. The First Americans, coming across the Bering Strait (or Isthmus), had to move southward "between the sea and the mountains" (p. 13). How far south? If very far, they would have been confronted with very difficult mountain barriers. The better judgment is that they soon moved inland and came southward along the eastward side of the mountains that border the Pacific ocean.

The hulls of Pineda's ships "were perhaps a *third* as long as the masts were high" (p. 86). I doubt it. According to Samuel Morison, the *Santa Maria* (flagship of Columbus) had a mainmast that was *higher* than the length of the hull, measuring the mast from the keel, but the other two masts

were about one-third as high. The height of mainmasts on later day three masters, when actual information is available, was about equal to the length of the hull.

"Seeing in one place a white woman with painted chin . . ." (p. 137), should read an Indian woman who was light (or white) colored. The expression "white woman" implies a member of the Caucasian race. She might have been an albino.

In 1746, Don José de Escandón was selected "to command the settlement of the last Spanish frontier" (p. 340). The shades of Spanish-California pioneers should certainly protest this historical judgment in view of their labors in founding missions and presidios of Upper California in the 1770s.

Travellers left for the West from St. Louis, "floating down to Independence," where the trails began (p. 718). These travellers, of course, took boat *up* the Missouri river to Independence.

At the time of the annexation of Texas to the United States, "she had been guaranteed the right to divide herself by vote of her citizens into as many as five states . . ." (p. 800). The statement is well meant, but not correct. Statehood requires an act of Congress; it is not achieved by a simple expression of Territorial or Texan will. The text of the law reads: four more states "may hereafter, by the consent of said State [Texas], be formed out of the territory thereof, which shall be entitled to admission under the provisions of the Federal Constitution." Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, 2:2.

After a discussion of the establishment of forts in the Valley above El Paso in the 1850s, the text reads: "In later decades Fort Macrae . . . and Fort Selden were added to valley defenses" (p. 812)—a rather vague statement. These two named forts were established in 1869 and 1863 respectively.

"Every small party travelling the road from San Antonio to El Paso was attacked by Comanches . . ." (p. 813). I have read a statement of this sort elsewhere referring to the-year 1852; but I doubt that it would apply to every year; the author may be referring to 1852, but if so his discussion does not make that clear. To generalize so for the decade would be incorrect.

“Private inspiration was also the cause of much public disorder and suffering on the Texas river in the years that bracketed the Civil War . . . it was organized into bands of outlaw Mexicans (sometimes allied with Indians) that killed ranchers and travellers, destroyed property, and stole stock animals.” They were chased by the authorities of the United States and Mexico (p. 834). But on p. 853 one reads: “After the period of relative calm during the Civil War on the border, river outlaws [American and Mexican] came back to dominate the country with more violence than ever.”

Describing the Cliff Dwellers in the Southwest: “In one typical community house fifty million pieces of stone were quarried, carried and laid in its walls” (p. 17). This “typical” house is not named, but in describing the missions of Gran Quivira, I read the following: “Each church and its convent were made of millions of pieces of shaped sandstone, set layer by layer in earth mortar” (p. 261). This time some data is presented for analyzing the statement. The *nave* of the church at Quarái is 102 feet long and 57 feet wide; the ceiling was between 30 and 40 feet above the floor. Mathematical calculation reveals the weakness in the statement concerning the number of stones. And the data is not correct.

L. Bradford Prince (*Missions of New Mexico*) claims that he measured the church and gives the following dimensions: nave 64 feet, transept 24 feet, chancel 15 feet—or a total length for the church of 103 feet. The nave is 27 feet wide, the transept 48 feet, and the chancel at the far end is 8 feet wide. Accepting *Great River's* higher figure for the height of the walls, and without taking into account the area for mud plaster and entrance ways, there were about a quarter-million stones in the church. (Mr. Prince states that the stones varied from one to five inches in thickness and were seldom broader than a foot square). The stones in the convent would not increase the overall total sufficiently to even come close to the figure given by Mr. Horgan.

(2) Another blemish in *Great River* is the number of questionable statements on historical events, despite the desire of the author not to depart “from the inflexible limits of respectful scholarship.” For instance, after discussing the various scholarly suggestions in regard to the abandonment

of the cliff dwellings in the Mesa Verde, he gives full reign to his imagination with the conclusion that "Fear of their gods may well have sent the cliff people from the mesas to the river" (p. 23). Likewise the abandonment of Pecos Pueblo, about 1838, is attributed to the escape of the legendary black snake (p. 22). If one wishes to accept the legend for the end of Pecos Pueblo, the extinction of the fire of Montezuma would be acceptable also. But serious-minded scholars judge that attrition from disease and Comanche attacks were the real factors. I might add that most of the few survivors, around a dozen, migrated to the Pueblo of Jemez, not to one on the "river."

Fray Marcos "saw the city with his own eyes, from a safe distance" (p. 107), is a straightforward acceptance of the Friar's own version of his experience. The weight of scholarly opinion doubts that Fray Marcos saw Cíbola. Even the eminent Professor Bolton did not accept the claim, although he admits that new evidence may come to light some day that will modify the current judgment (*Coronado on the Turquoise Trail*, p. 35). Nor is it correct to write that Estevanico, the advance representative of the Friar, was killed on first arrival at Cíbola because he did not promptly leave at the command of the Indian Chief (p. 107). On the contrary, he was lodged over night and on attempting to flee was killed during the forenoon of the next day, as the Friar states, or three days later according to Castañeda, the historian of the Coronado expedition. (See Hammond and Rey, *Narratives of the Coronado Expedition*, pp. 75, 177, 199).

In describing the battle that led to the subjugation of the Pueblo of Arenal, the mounted soldiers are pictured as making "charges forward on horseback to cover efforts on the ground against the very walls" (p. 124). A charge was made in the battle at Zuñi, but it proved to be fruitless and the men were dismounted to fight better. Why the same tactics should be repeated at Arenal is hard to understand, nor do the sources reveal that a charge was made.

The Battle of Arenal was marked by some extreme examples of brutality in warfare, but it is incorrect to write that Coronado "approved his [Captain Cárdenas] whole

action in the victorious battle" (p. 126). Coronado himself denied responsibility for the brutality, specifically the burning of some Indians. The mature judgment of scholars attribute the cruelty to soldiers stimulated by the heat of battle. (Bolton, *Coronado*, p. 393; Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, p. 25).

The killing of the Turk, Coronado's guide on the journey to Quivira, was due to more reasons than merely that of lying about the prospects of wealth (p. 141). He also plotted to stir up the Quivira people against the Spaniards and to bring about their destruction by curtailing the supply of corn on which they were dependent. (Bolton, *Coronado*, p. 300f; H. and R., *Narratives*, p. 336).

The only significance granted to the Coronado expedition by Mr. Horgan was that the commander had failed to find "the land of his imagining . . ." (p. 147). But it was not the land of *his* imagining that was not found, but the land of abundant wealth that many believed existed and hoped to find. The Viceroy of New Spain was responsible for sending forth this venture whereby land unknown to the white man was explored along a route from the Colorado river on the west to the present-day state of Kansas, with many a detour between the two points. The Grand Canyon was first seen by white men, the Pueblo people were made known, and the first blood of Christian martyrs was shed on the soil of the United States of America. Professor Bolton devotes nine pages to discussing the significance of the Coronado expedition.

A note of probability (of which I approve) creeps into another judgment in *Great River*. It is in keeping with the doubt, Mistress Clio, that your earliest disciple, Herodotus, sometimes expressed when not sure of his information: "Perhaps more than any one other motive it was a belief in their own inherent greatness that took the men of the Golden Age to their achievements in geography and colonization" (p. 191). You may draw your own conclusion as to the validity of this judgment.

Looking eastward from Tabirá (a pueblo on the southeastern edge of the Manzano mountains) toward "the plains,

where hidden in space lived the quick and starving enemy"—meaning the Apache (p. 262)—is a return to the less critical-minded statements. The Apache on the eastern side of New Mexico lived on the buffalo, a rather secure source of food, and their plight as described does not ring true. Nor does the episode about cannibalism among them, as presented on p. 263. The impression is received that the latter story comes from the letter written by a Friar in 1669, but it originated from a story by Captain Aguilar under date of 1663 (C. W. Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents . . .*, 3:144). But that is aside the point. The more important aspect is that it can leave the reader with the notion that citizens of Apache descent have a cannibalistic ancestry. That is an extreme judgment and does them an injustice.

Late in the day of August 9, 1680, the Indian governors of Pecos and Taos Pueblos warned Governor Otermín of the pending rebellion of the Pueblo folk, so Mr. Horgan writes. The Governor thanked them. "He then sent warnings to the officials in all Spanish districts. . . . He asked them to muster aid and come to the defense of the capital" (p. 284f). The version in the more authoritative discussion of the subject reads that "On August 9 Otermín learned from the Tanos [not Taos], San Marcos, and La Ciénega chiefs . . ." of the revolt (Hackett, *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*, 1:xxvii). He then sent warning messages to the outlying district leaders "that they might exercise the care that the case demands" (*Ibid.*, 1:4).

The uprising of the Pueblo folk in 1680 was precipitated by runners carrying a knotted cord. The Gods had told the rebel leader Popé "to make a cord of maguey fibres 'and tie some knots in it which would signify the number of days' for each pueblo to 'wait before the rebellion.' Each knot was a day apart from the next one. . . . Each pueblo agreeing to the revolt untied its own knot and . . . the runners went on to the next" (p. 296). This is Hallenbeck's interpretation of the knot story (*Land of the Conquistadores*) based on W. W. H. Davis, *The Spanish Conquest of New Mexico*. The sensible interpretation of the purpose of the knot, and the one advanced by Hackett (*Pueblo Revolt*, 1:xxvi; 2:234,

246), is that one knot was untied *each day* as the runners traveled their route. Thus each Pueblo would know the number of days remaining and could revolt on the prescribed day.

Great River also reads that "The earliest New Mexico [land?] grant under title was given in 1685" (p. 353). This grant was for a mine (R. E. Twitchell, *Archives of New Mexico*, v. 1). There were land grants prior to the Rebellion of 1680.

"Traders came to Texas, trappers entered northern New Mexico, and by 1804 sixty-eight foreigners had come to Texas to stay" (p. 396). It should be made clear that the few who entered New Mexico were law violators; they were placed in the calaboose for varying lengths of time, or remained in New Mexico under duress.

The statement that "Nolan evidently had the implicit support of the United States . . ." (p. 397) is far too strong, and places our government in a position of positive support of illegal activities. This adventurer into Texas, who operated about the end of the century in catching wild horses, *might* have had the support or encouragement of an American official, namely General Wilkinson, commander on the Southwestern frontier. (Cf. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 5:232ff; Robles, *Coahuila and Texas*, 1:37; *Texas Handbook*).

"An American lieutenant with a small band of men travelling as traders, and perhaps even as settlers, had been dispatched by General Wilkinson to examine the plains and enter New Mexico from the north" (p. 403). To label this small band of soldiers under command of Lieutenant Zeb-luon Pike (taken into custody in 1807 by Spanish authorities of New Mexico) as traders or settlers is indeed far fetched. They were enlisted men of the army. They were not provided with trade goods, and least of all could they be described as settlers. The evidence is inadequate to state that they were dispatched to *enter New Mexico*.

For the life of me I cannot understand the statement about the Mexican tariff law of 1830 as applied to Texas. *Great River* reads: "It may have been a measure in retaliation for abuses of the customs laws by the Texans, who for

years had taken advantage of exemption from duty on goods to be used for building the colony to introduce all sorts of other goods in great quantity which they illegally used in commerce" (p. 492). The secondary authorities speak as follows: under the national colonization law of 1823, "the government had granted to the colonists an extension for six years the right of importation for everything they would introduce for their use and consumption, it had not been necessary to establish one single custom-house on the frontier or coast of Texas" (Alessio Robles, *Texas and Coahuila*, 1:401, 105). In John Henry Brown's paraphrase: "As an inducement to immigration, immigrants were to be relieved of all tithes, taxes, impost duties, etc., for six years" under this law (*History of Texas*, 1:110). E. C. Barker and Carlos Castañeda agree with the statement.

By the state law of 1825, "exemption from general taxes for a period of ten years was granted to all settlers" (Barker, *Life of Stephen F. Austin*, p. 198).

The colonization law of 1823 reads: "During the first six years from the date of the concession, the colonists shall not pay titles [tithes?], duties on their produce, nor any contribution under whatever name it shall be called," and instruments and utensils "at the time of their coming . . . shall be free," also merchandise to the value of \$2,000 per family (gammel, *Laws of Texas*, 1:30). The state law stipulated that the settlers should be "free from every contribution under whatever denomination . . .," except in the case of invasion; and their "produce and effect" from agriculture and industry shall pay no duty on transit or sale (*Ibid.*, 1:104, 44).

In a discussion of events during the Texas revolution, the statement appears that "a force of prisoners numbering over three hundred, including the Texan commander Fannin, was under guard at Goliad" (p. 533). But on p. 777 I read that "Santa Anna's subordinates, under his order, massacred five hundred Texans at Goliad after they had surrendered." Colonel Portilla records that there were 445 prisoners, eighty were exempted from execution and the number shot was 365. A recent study lists 352 killed (*Southwestern His-*

torical Quarterly, 43:33; The *Texas Handbook* reads 342).

During the 1830s, under Mexico as under Spain, "organized life clung to the valley of the Rio Grande from Taos to El Paso, leaving the rest of the huge territory virtually without population except for the travelling Indians . . ." (p. 541). The description is misleading. There was a long unsettled area between El Paso and the first of the up-river villages. New Mexico was literally surrounded with Indians. Furthermore the description does not harmonize with the statement that there was a presidial company of soldiers at Santa Fe to protect the northern frontier, "and to deal with civil disturbances throughout a province of over a hundred thousand square miles"! (p. 545). If 400 miles is taken as the estimated distance from the San Luis valley, north of Taos, to El Paso and is multiplied by 40 miles as the estimated average width of the valley, both settled and unsettled parts, and a generous estimate it is, the square mileage is only 16,000.

In New Mexico as of the 1830s, "there were no paupers . . .," because if a man did not have land, he could get sheep on shares (p. 550). But on p. 552 is found the description, "New Mexico in her wretched subsistence economy. . ." A wretched economy without paupers is a contradiction. Josiah Gregg observed "crowds of *léperos*" in Santa Fe (*Commerce of the Prairies*, p. 78 (1954 edition)). I doubt that it was easy to get sheep on shares, or that there were sufficient sheep owners to make a sizable dent in relieving paupers as described above. A description of peonage and slavery in New Mexico at this point would have been appropriate for a picture of the social scene.

The description of military equipment for the same period puzzles me. When Governor Armijo marched against the Texan invaders in 1841, "With him were about a thousand men-at-arms—Mexicans with guns and cutlery, Indians with lances, bows and arrows" (p. 576). On p. 717 the text reads that Mexican laws prohibited the introduction of fire-arms among the population; "But for a handful, ranchers, farmers, and town dwellers were armed only with bows and arrows." More than a "handful" of Mexicans marched against the Texans. I suspect that poverty was the real

reason, not the laws, for the scarcity of firearms among New Mexicans.

The discussion of the declaration of war against Mexico in 1846 (p. 692) is not satisfactory. It reads as though war were dependent on a hostile act by Mexico, and President Polk's diary is cited as authority for the statement. A closer reading of the diary will reveal that a message to Congress recommending a declaration of war was agreed upon Saturday morning, May 11, in cabinet meeting, with the President having stated, and on more than one previous occasion, that there was ample cause for war other than a hostile act. So the presidential decision for war was made before news of the hostile act on the Rio Grande in April reached Washington. This news was subsequently incorporated in the message to bolster the plea for a declaration of war.

"As the American movements of the whole Mexican war, but for the California naval campaign, had been based on the Rio Grande . . ." (p. 774)—this is an odd statement in view of General Scott's major campaign based on Vera Cruz.

President Polk told Congress in December that the United States " 'might have to take the full measure of indemnity into its hands'—which all understood to mean the annexation of the whole of Mexico" (p. 778). This is an exaggerated interpretation of the presidential message. He did not say or mean this, nor did *all* so understand. (The author's quotation, Dear Lady, is from any one of nineteen sources).

"In 1802 the French declared it [Rio Grande] the farthest limit of Louisiana . . ." (p. 780); but not so after the purchase by the United States. According to S. F. Bemis (*Diplomatic History* . . . p. 184, 1941 ed.), France supported Spain diplomatically in the argument over the western boundary of Louisiana. And Jefferson informed Congress, December 6, 1805: "her [France] silence as to the western boundary leaving us to infer her opinion might be against Spain in that quarter."

I also read in *Great River* that President Polk instructed Mr. Trist "not to take a line north of the 32nd parallel," and that he had ignored his instructions (p. 804). The author is

quoting any one of eight sources; I have no intention of trying to find the one that led him astray. Sufficient to say that on April 15, 1847, Mr. Trist was instructed to secure, as the international boundary, the Rio Grande to the "southern" boundary of New Mexico, thence west to the southwest corner of New Mexico, northward to the Rio Gila (far above the 32nd parallel). Later instructions (July 13) called for a line from the mouth of the Rio Grande to the 32nd parallel, thence west and north to the Gila, *or* west to the Gulf of Lower California; *or* (July 19) to the Gulf or the Pacific coast. But the contents of the latter two missives were *not a sine qua non* for a peace treaty. Trist did violate his instructions in one particular, but no agreement thereby was made with the Mexican government; and in later negotiations he secured the Gila boundary line.

"To guard a fifteen-hundred mile frontier containing fifty thousand Indians—of whom over twenty thousand were actively hostile—New Mexico in 1854 had a total of sixteen hundred and fifty-four officers and men, scattered among less than a dozen forts (p. 806). I count five forts along the river in New Mexico in 1854, including Fort Bliss. But the length of the frontier as stated must mean the inclusion of the Rio Grande to its mouth! There were five additional forts along the river in Texas. I might add that there was not a frontier *line* in New Mexico in the 1850s. Uncle Sam's fighting men had established forts in the *midst* of the Indian country, so there were more than just the ones along the river. And there were not 50,000 Indians in New Mexico at that time.

"Each fort on the border river had units of artillery, infantry and mounted infantry, a band, quartermaster's and ordnance departments, occasionally a chaplain; and invariably a component of laundresses—some of whom were soldiers' wives . . ." (p. 807). This is a too ideal picture of border forts. A unit of artillery was not stationed at each fort, nor was it needed. Each fort did not have a band. The term "mounted infantry" is too restrictive for the period under discussion. The Dragoon was also the mounted man of the army. Laundress? *Quien sabe*.

In regard to the famous camel experiment in the South-

west, Mr. Horgan states that an Inspector General of the Army inspected the animals "and approved the first stage of the experiment, which was to keep them for breeding" (p. 810). But Lesley states that "Major Wayne seems to have misunderstood his orders, for he was roundly scolded by the Quartermaster-General at Washington for expecting to experiment with camel-breeding rather than determine on the fitness of the animals for military service" (*Uncle Sam's Camels*, p. 11). Their subsequent fate was much more involved and interesting than is pointed out in *Great River*.

That New Mexico did not encourage slavery in the 1850s, the author states, was indicated by the small number, some twenty-two in all (p. 821). Does he imply anti-slavery sentiment? There was little need for Negro slavery in the Territory due to the local practice of peonage and a supply of cheap non-peon labor. Sentiment in favor of paving the way for the introduction of Negro slaves when wanted was revealed when a pro-slavery law was passed by an overwhelming majority in the Territorial legislature in 1859. A legislative committee reported the following year that "We have room enough and employment enough for all that will come." The Civil War ended the discussion. (The subject is treated in Loomis M. Ganaway, "*New Mexico and the Sectional Controversy, 1846-1861*", Santa Fe, 1944).

The discussion of the Indian problem in Book Four, Chapter 36, leaves me unimpressed. The Peace Policy of the Government is confused with the policy of placing Indians on reservations. The latter was started in California and Texas in the early 1850s and abortive attempts were made in New Mexico later in the decade. The Peace Policy was adopted in the first administration of President Grant as an alternative to the Indian wars. The Army took temporary control of the numerous reservations until a new group of Indian agents, nominated by various Churches, could be appointed to office. Therefore the statement that, "In 1867, either by treaty, or by direct order of the President of the United States, the Plains Indian nations were limited to reserved lands. The borderland tribes were assigned to the Indian Territory . . ." (p. 852), leaves an unsound notion in

the mind of the reader. If the term "borderland" tribes refers to the Ute, Navaho and the bulk of the Apache people, the Indians more closely associated with the story of the Rio Grande in New Mexico, it is certainly incorrect. Scarcely a handful of these Indians ever saw the Indian Territory (a part of present-day Oklahoma).

A fairy tale is still passed along in Mr. Horgan's discussion of Judge Roy Bean, popularly associated with the expression "law west of the Pecos." "His village, first called Vinegaroon, Texas, he renamed in her honor," that is, the famous actress, Lily Langtry (p. 904). The sounder version of the story reveals that Vinegaroon and Langtry were two different locations and the latter was named for a man associated with building the railroad across West Texas. The available evidence is found in Ruel McDaniel, *Vinegaroon: The Saga of Judge Roy Bean . . .*; Everett Lloyd, *Law West of the Pecos: The Story of Roy Bean*; C. L. Sonnichsen, *Roy Bean*; *Texas Handbook*. (None of these is listed in the bibliography of *Great River*).

In 1914, during the aftermath of the Huerta revolution in Mexico, some American sailors were taken into custody by Mexican soldiers in a restricted area at Tampico. The detachment had made an innocent mistake. "They were released in two hours," so *Great River* reads, "and General Huerta hastened to explain that . . . his soldiers had only done their duty" (p. 914). This was not so. General Huerta did not hasten to explain anything. The local commander, Zaragoza, made the explanation, but the incident developed into a full-blown diplomatic incident between Huerta and the Government of the United States. A serious situation was finally relieved when the ABC powers offered to mediate, an offer that was accepted by the two contentious powers.

(3) I have had a special interest, Mistress Clio, in the history of the Navaho people for some time, so a statement on p. 743 was intriguing from the standpoint of bibliography: on the day of General Doniphan's departure from Santa Fe, October 26, 1846, "the Navajos, as though to confirm the need of his discipline, raided the old river villages south of Albuquerque—Tomé, Valencia and the rest—killing many

people and driving off five thousand sheep from the valley farms" (p. 743).

I wanted to know the source of information for this raid, but it was difficult to find. The chapter bibliography in *Great River* lists nine items. I judged that two of them would not be pertinent. Five others did not contain the facts (and remember, Dear Lady, there are no specific citations to page numbers). A secondary source (Keleher, *Turmoil in New Mexico*, p. 23) reads: General Kearny left Santa Fe, September 25, 1846, "They [the Navaho] trailed his beef herd and stole several head from it at Algodones, 23 miles north of Albuquerque. They raided settlements at various places between Albuquerque and Polvadera; killed seven or eight settlers, and stole thousands of cattle, sheep and horses. Kearny learned of the raids at La Joya." Polvadera is about 60 miles south of Albuquerque.

Keleher cites Emory's *Report*, which states, under date of October 2, that a message was received at La Joya that 40 Navahos had passed the Rio Grande the previous night; on the 3rd, a New Mexican arrived in camp and reported an attack on Polvadera; on the 4th about 100 Indians had driven off all the horses and cattle; they retreated with the "cattle & goats," but were cut off by pursuers. They slaughtered as many as possible of the cattle and goats and scampered away with the horses and "mules."

In Hughes, *Doniphan Expedition*, p. 79f, 1847 edition (a book not listed in the chapter bibliography), I found the following statements: about November 3, 1846, soldiers at Isleta were informed by the Pueblo residents that about three days previous the Navahos had seized one woman, five children, great number of sheep, cattle, mules, and had killed eight Mexicans and Pueblos. They were pursued with some success. Under date of October 2 (*Ibid.*, p. 83), at La Joya, Kearny ordered Doniphan to the Navaho country. He had been informed when near Socorro that Navahos had recently crossed the mountains, killed seven or eight men, taking as many more women and children prisoners, and had driven off 10,000 sheep, cattle, and mules.

The statement in *Great River* is a rather loose comment in view of the sources cited.

Becoming fearful lest I couldn't see the forest for the trees, I decided to investigate fully one chapter, selecting Book Two, Chapter 38, entitled "Hacienda and Village" (pp. 352-390). Thirty-three items are listed in the chapter bibliography (no specific citations to the sources, *caramba*). The description is for eighteenth century New Mexico. Three of the items listed are general histories and cannot be drawn upon safely for this isolated frontier province of New Spain. They are Madariaga's *Rise of the Spanish American Empire* and *Fall of the Spanish American Empire*. Mr. Horgan uses one quote from Humboldt via the first named book; it is of doubtful value for New Mexico. The third item is Priestley's *The Coming of the White Man, 1492-1848*.

Four other works provide little insight for this century: Benavides' *Revised Memorial of 1634*, Perez de Villagra's *History . . .*, Bolton's *Coronado . . .* and *The Spanish Borderlands*.

Three eighteenth century works are valid, but furnish little information; Hackett's *Historical Documents . . .* (v. 3), Twitchell's *Spanish Archives*, and an excellent item based on research but of little assistance for Mr. Horgan, namely, Fray Angelico Chavez, *Our Lady of the Conquest*.

The balance of this chapter bibliography consists of twentieth century publications. Some of them are of no value whatsoever for the purpose listed. A few are good studies within their own limitations, but again not reliable for eighteenth century history. When documentation appears, it is nineteenth century sources, usually observations by Americans who appeared on the scene nearly a century and a half after the re-establishment of Spanish control in New Mexico.

"Hacienda and Village," in relation to the bibliography, is largely a figment of the imagination. If traditions among New Mexicans of Spanish ancestry were drawn upon, credit is not given.

While discussing bibliography, Dear Lady, I shall add a few more comments at this point. The discussion of the Penitentes in New Mexico (p. 376f) is confused. The author did not have the benefit of Fray Angelico Chavez, "The Penitentes of New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 29:97, because it was published too late. But he does credit

Fray Angelico with a reading of *Great River* in manuscript, so I cannot account for the confusion. The worthy Fray has published the best account of the Penitentes based on research.

Poor Doña Bárcelo takes another beating; the Lady "who presided over much of the vice of Santa Fe . . . with her wig and false teeth" (p. 762). I hope that future writers will pay more attention to a closely reasoned revision of this person's character and place in New Mexican history (see Fray Angelico Chavez in *El Palacio*, 57:227-34).

For the seventeenth century part of *Great River*, the several studies of France V. Scholes on New Mexico, published in the *New Mexico Historical Review*, should not have been overlooked, nor the initial study of Oñate by George P. Hammond (*Ibid.*). The eighteenth century still awaits much historical research, but any beginner in the period should read H. H. Bancroft, *Arizona and New Mexico*, and C. F. Coan, *History of New Mexico*.

The description of New Mexican government in the Mexican period is quite inadequate. L. B. Bloom, in *Old Santa Fe* (a magazine, not Twitchell's book) should be read. Additional articles, although not as thorough as might be desired, can be found in late volumes of the *New Mexico Historical Review*. Important for the whole period of *Great River* are the several regional journals of history, especially *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, and occasional periodical articles published in more general magazines of history.

(4) Well, Dear Lady, returning again to the text of *Great River*, I shall make a few more comments.

For instance, Henry VIII's essay written in defense of the Church at the time of the Protestant Reformation was published in 1521, not in 1519 (p. 84).

"A few elite soldiers handled the heavily chased flintlock muskets . . ." on the Pineda expedition to the Rio Grande (p. 88). The year 1519 was too early for the flintlock; it was invented about a century later (*Britannica*, 14th ed.)

Fray Marcos did not return to Mexico by "early summer," as the text reads, from his journey to find Cíbola (p. 106). That was too early to complete the round trip. He arrived home in *late* summer.

Coronado in the battles at Zuñi did not wear "a helmet of gold" (p. 109). Elsewhere the author refers to *gilded* armor which is more accurate according to the sources. Gold would not make a good protective headpiece anyway in comparison with iron.

Enroute from Zuñi to the Rio Grande, Alvarado "passed other towns, notably Ácoma . . ." (p. 113). The "other towns" were old ruins. (cf. Bolton, *Coronado*, p. 182f; Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*).

"Cárdenas came to the twelve towns of Tiguex, and near the most southerly, on the west bank . . .," prepared camp opposite Bernalillo (p. 115). The author has followed Bolton (*Coronado*, p. 193) in this statement, but there were probably fifteen pueblos and the camp site was nearer the northern border of Tiguex province (cf. Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, p. 22 note).

"The royal treasuries had supported the expenses" of the Coronado expedition (p. 147). On the contrary, it was what might be termed a joint-stock company venture. Viceroy Mendoza and Coronado were heavy investors and lost accordingly. Spanish rulers in general did not pay for exploring the New World.

Alexander VI (the Pope) did not give all the New World to the King and Queen of Spain in 1493 (p. 177). Portugal, according to the original line of demarcation, received the tip of Brazil and, the following year, a larger part by the Treaty of Tordesillas, a more significant act than the so-called "gift" of the Pope. For a fuller discussion see Silvio Zavala, *New Viewpoints on the Spanish Colonization of America*, 1943.

The Indians were taught "more often in the Indian tongues which the Friars learned rapidly . . ." (p. 181). Unfortunately, the Friars in New Mexico were very lax about learning the Indian languages.

The discussion of the *encomienda* is incorrect (p. 241). It was a system of tribute from the Indian to the *encomendero* for the support of the latter who in turn rendered service in defense of the province. (Zavala, *op. cit.*)

In New Mexico, the "Governors came and went every three years with the supply trains . . ." (p. 245). Neither the

Governors nor the trains were that regular; and the discussion of the trains (p. 268) is incorrect in other respects. (cf. F. V. Scholes, *op. cit.*). Fray Ysidro Ordóñez was not in Taos when he quarreled with Governor Peralta in 1613 (p. 245). The issue arose at the Pueblo of Nambé where he met the soldiers and countermanded orders of the Governor.

“the old colony left El Paso for the north. All their difficulties in the undertaking were by now familiar ones . . .” (p. 316). The resettlement of New Mexico by De Vargas was not accomplished quite so easily. Many of the old settlers did not return; they were *too* familiar with the difficulties. (cf. J. Manuel Espinosa, *Crusaders of the Rio Grande.*)

Nor is it correct to write that De Vargas, when imprisoned by Governor Cubero, “lived isolated in his cell like a criminal” until released (p. 319); at least not unless the author has better sources of information than Espinosa (*op. cit.*). The confinement of De Vargas was not so rigorous.

It is not correct to write that on April 23, 1706, Santa Fe “decreed” the establishment of Albuquerque (p. 328). The document referred to is a letter from the Governor of New Mexico to the Viceroy stating that the new villa *had been* founded. By the above date the settlers were established in their new homes. Incidentally, El Paso was not a royal town—it was the site of a mission and a presidio. It could be referred to by the Spanish word *real* because the word means a military site or encampment.

After discussing the founding of Albuquerque, the text reads: “Bernalillo was already six years old” (p. 329). The former was founded in 1706. According to Espinosa, the date for Bernalillo is late 1695. However, there were settlers in that locality during the seventeenth century, prior to the Rebellion.

A mid-eighteenth century census estimated a population of 771 households, comprising approximately 10,000 people (p. 348). Household is not usually cited as the basis for population. Bishop Tamarón's census of 1760 lists 1517 *families* or 7665 persons, not counting the Pueblo folk. There are various enumerations for the century (see Bancroft, *Arizona and New Mexico*).

San Marcos, Texas, was founded in 1806 (if I read the text correctly), "as an outpost against organized American intrusion. It was the old design that had been followed over Texas so often before; and it suffered a familiar fate" (p. 402). The town was founded in 1808 (*Texas Handbook*; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, 5:315, 333; 6:56). Its fate was that of abandonment after a few years; otherwise I cannot understand the statement.

Mier and Terán (which should read Mier y Terán) "established a dozen or so military posts in Texas . . ." (p. 493). What this Mexican leader did was to establish five (maybe six) new garrisons and strengthen three long established (Robles, *op. cit.*, 1:373; Barker, *op. cit.*, pp. 304, 326).

"No new pueblos and only a few Mexican towns were founded after the turn of the nineteenth century. Above Taos, Arroyo Hondo, in 1823, and Questa, in 1829, were added to the Mexican communities" (p. 542). This statement overlooks the Mexican settlements in the San Luis Valley (present-day state of Colorado); the settlements at Doña Ana, Las Vegas, Carñuel, Tijeras, Cebolleta, and Anton Chico.

In presenting a picture of New Mexico in the 1830s, the author writes: "A farm here, a flour mill there, a lumberyard, a brickkiln, a tannery . . ." (p. 551). This is much overdrawn. There was scarcely a piece of sawed lumber in all New Mexico prior to the American occupation, and I assume that is the kind referred to by the word *lumber yard*. The sun dried brick, or adobe, was the common building material. There were at least two and possibly more flour mills.

Texans would not like the statement that General Houston was their first President (p. 586). They credit David Y. Burnet with that distinction, and rightfully so.

Mr. Snively, in the name of the Texas Republic, planned to attack a rich caravan from Santa Fe to St. Louis in 1843, "which on its return trip from Saint Louis was accompanied by Governor Armijo in his amplitude" (p. 600). The Governor did not accompany the caravan.

When trying to stave off war with Mexico in 1845-46, Mr. Horgan writes that the American diplomatic representa-

tive was instructed to secure as a boundary line the Rio Grande from its mouth to El Paso, thence due west,—Mexico to receive \$25 million in compensation; “and in addition,” the Rio Grande from mouth to source, the United States to assume debt claims against Mexico to a minimum of \$2 million (p. 606). The statement not only is incorrect, but doesn’t make sense on its face. In the first place, Dear Lady, please substitute the word *or* for the phrase “and in addition.” They were two separate and distinct alternative offers. But that is not all. President Polk offered Mexico *four* separate propositions. The minimum was Mexican acceptance of the Rio Grande as the boundary from mouth to source, thence north to the 42 parallel, in return for American payment of American monetary claims against Mexico, the amount to be adjudicated. This could have prevented war if the Mexican government had been in a position to accept it. The propositions are clear in W. R. Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States*, 8:182f.

Francisco García Conde is named as one of two interim governors of New Mexico between the second and third terms of Manuel Armijo (p. 716). José Chávez y Castillo, not Conde, was the second of the two.

“At Querétaro on May twenty-fifth [1848] the treaty was ratified by the Mexican government . . . and ratifications were exchanged. . . . In the same month . . . gold was discovered at Sutter’s Fort . . .” (p. 780). The discovery of gold in California occurred on January 24, 1848, and the treaty was *signed* February 2.

The Gadsden Purchase, 1853, included the town of Mesilla “and also Lemitar,” where Manuel Armijo died; “He did not live to see his remaining property formally annexed with southern New Mexico” (p. 805). He could not have witnessed such an action if he had lived; Lemitar was not within the Gadsden Purchase.

In the Purchase, since the War with Mexico, there was “an unremitting terror laid down by Apache, Comanche and Lipan Indians . . .” (p. 806). The Comanche and Lipan did not raid in the area of the Purchase; they lived far to the eastward.

"When first the Apaches and later the Navajos broke out of the reservation [the Bosque Redondo on the Rio Pecos], they were allowed to return to their old lands" (p. 833). These two peoples were placed on this one reservation in 1863-64. They did not get along together for several reasons, so the Apache decamped in 1865 and were not brought back by the military. The Navahos were returned to their homeland by terms of a treaty with the United States negotiated in June, 1868; not because they "broke out" (only a few did so), but for other reasons. (See *New Mexico Historical Review*, v. 13).

"The Texas and Pacific reached eastward from San Diego to El Paso in 1877 . . ." (p. 886) is not an accurate statement. This railroad was constructed westward through Texas and never reached a point farther than 90 miles east of El Paso. There it joined with the Southern Pacific railroad which was built eastward from the Colorado river at Yuma.

The statement that "the first World War began in Europe" on August 4, 1914 (p. 917) is certainly an over simplification. Austria declared war on Serbia, July 28; Germany declared war on Russia, August 1; Germany declared war on France, August 3; the British ultimatum to Germany expired at midnight on August 4.

A few statements in *Great River* might be described as the romantic version of history, or a love of the lurid, selections I assume intended to heighten reader interest in keeping with Mr. Horgan's professions in the Preface. This in itself is not bad, but the implications as historical interpretation or judgment are not sound. For instance, in a striking, interesting description of the Spanish crew of Pineda's ship (p. 87), they are all brunettes. I am surprised in view of Spain's cultural heritage that there was not at least one blonde.

When Otermín made his re-entry into New Mexico after the retreat of 1680, he gave up the attempt at reconquest when informed of the plan of the Indians at Cochiti to massacre his advance party while they were being seduced during the night by a bevy of maidens assembled for that purpose. "The whole seventy men were in mortal danger" (p. 296).

This interpretation does not jibe with the belief of the Spanish "in their own inherent greatness" (p. 191). The story can be found in the source material, but it sounds silly to me. Furthermore, a more valid reason for the failure of the expedition can be found in the same documentary source.

Great River presents a sharp contrast in the Mexican character between the colonial and post-independence period. "The politics of the new nation seemed to care little for the individual human life [beginning in 1821]. Such indifference was deeply rooted in the sacrificial rites of the ancient sun priests," etc. (p. 456). Indifference to the individual human life in the *Colonial* period seems well attested in the preceding pages of the book.

"An observant citizen was convinced . . ." that the decline in Pueblo Indian population by the 1830s was due to "an abuse which is deeply rooted among Indian women; they refuse to bear more than four children; they succeed in this matter by drinking certain beverages which they prepare for that purpose" (p. 542). I think that this conviction exceeds the powers of observation; it cannot be substantiated, of course, but colleagues of mine, more learned in the history of Pueblo folk, tell me that this statement is, well, to put it mildly, nonsense. Incidentally, "the observant citizen" was Antonio Barreiro, *Ojeada . . .*, 1832, not Bautista Pino, *Exposición . . .*, 1814, as cited by Mr. Horgan.

The statement that the Rio Grande boundary line was won by the "whole American nation . . .," etc. (p. 781) overlooks the sharp political cleavage in the country over the war with Mexico. Even Abraham Lincoln was a caustic critic of the "Democrats" war. The author accepts Walt Whitman's patriotic interpretation too literally.

Great River informs the reader that the army tried to solve the Indian problem by making peace with them; each commander tried it. At peace scenes Indians camped in tepees. After a treaty was signed, "The soldiers relaxed, and a few drifted among the Indians to see them closely, and discover if they carried gold bullets; and if so, as many did, to trade a dozen leaden balls for one gold. By dark the soldiers were back in their own camp . . ." (p. 814). I would like to

know the source of this yarn. The way it is told implies that it was a regular occurrence in treaty making. I rifled through four of the twenty books cited for the chapter, but wearied of the task. The only story that I know about gold bullets was told by Felix Aubrey and he was not making a treaty with the Apache. Trading for gold bullets was labeled a tall tale over a century ago.

Another example: Apaches perfected the art of sheep stealing. They formed a flock in an oblong pattern, "never wider than thirty feet," and lashed the strongest together by their horns, two by two, for "a living fence"; "Indian drivers strode along beside and behind the flock, and at its head a squad of young, hardy Indians set the pace. Running night and day, the desert thieves could take twenty thousand sheep from fifty to seventy miles in a day, sometimes making swift marches of up to fifteen hundred miles, far out of reach of organized pursuit" (p. 813). If there is a grain of truth in this, Dear Lady, please let me know.

The goriest of the stories about Governor Perez' fate in 1837 is incorporated in this book. His head, so Kendall reported, was kicked around Santa Fe like a football. And also the improbable story of Manuel Armijo stealing the same sheep twelve times and selling it to the owner. The period of Perez and Armijo has never been adequately studied. I hope that some day a serious minded student will take hold of it and work out a valid story. Meanwhile, L. B. Bloom (*op. cit.*) should be read.

"Below the intense scowl of his domed brow gazed his great eyes—the right, level and calm; the left, alight and piercing" (p. 457). In the pictures that I have seen of Austin, there is no such difference between the eyes. There may have been a photographic or printing defect in some picture.

I hope that a scholar will delve into the history of the Southwestern Indians and present a more reasonable interpretation of the relations between the red man and the white man. *Great River* is objective on the whole in the sense that it does not break a lance for the Spanish or Anglo. But the superiority complex of the white man still peeps forth toward the poor red man. Speaking of Indians when posed for

battle: "Sometimes they had with them their rag-bundled women. The warriors were polygamous, and their striding women were fiercely contentious for the man who owned them. Aprowl like cats across the thorny land, they clawed their way after their thieving, murdering, lying, lords" (p. 816). The moving picture producers present a more honest picture of our Indian citizens' ancestors.

In resumé, *Mistress Clio*, I submit for your judgment that an attempt to stimulate the reader a la Macaulay is alright, but it is well to keep in mind that the famous English historian was breaking a lance for Whiggish political principles. This is not the proper approach for presenting good history. In seeking the "expression of a humanly significant meaning," a la Huxley, it is advisable to select historically "significant" facts; or, as Delacroix wrote, the "relatively important." The relatively *lesser* important historical facts have been selected too often in composing the story of *Great River*.

In seeking to present a work of art in keeping with Allan Nevins' point of view, *Great River* reveals too much labor expended on the chapter picture and not enough thought devoted to the whole. There is no over-all theme; no over-all conclusion; no final summation of the significance of the story. The end of the story just fades away. As a work of art, it is comparable to a collection of miniatures, some of them exceedingly well done. But this approach to the story of the Rio Grande leads to a conflict in interpretations and an over-all tone of falseness.

Carried away by the sensitivity of the artist, the mind of the author sometimes goes to sleep. For instance, in the concluding chapter, "The Rio Grande as the oldest vein of civilized life and communication in the area of the United States was unique in the settling of the West; for unlike other communities and areas of settlement, those of the Rio Grande were not born of the westward movement, but were already long established, with their own various patterns of life, when the recurrent American frontier reached out and put over them a new complex of living ways" (p. 941). The word *unique* is inappropriate because the same statement can be applied to California.

Mr. Horgan was influenced too much by Herodotus the story teller. Thucydides the critical-minded historian should have been heeded also. "If Thucydides lacks some of the graces which make Herodotus a delight, he is free from the sort of 'systematic error' which mars Herodotus' interpretation." (Francis R. B. Godolphin, ed., *The Greek Historians*, p. xxvi). The "systematic error" in *Great River*, I suspect, lies in building the story along the Rio Grande. A river is not a valid basis for writing history. An author, using such a basis, is forced to become a Procrustes who shortened or lengthened travelers to fit the size of his beds. The river historian likewise shapes his material to fit the preconceived form, rather than permitting the material to dictate the form. The ancient Greek should have fitted the bed to the traveller, rather than vice versa.

History is the never ending search for the closest approximation to the truth of what happened, why it happened and when it happened. It is governed by accepted canons of scholarship. Many are the workers in the search. The end result is a product of collective effort. He who spreads abroad unsound history, renders a disservice in the joint effort to find the truth.

Embellishing with a fine literary style enhances the pleasure of the reader, but the *substance*, not the *style*, is the prime consideration. When the historian-artist neglects the former, he renders justice to neither.

"One might add quotation to quotation, merely to show that for almost 2500 years, in the Hebraic-Hellenic-Christian civilization that we inherit, truth has been recognized as the essence of history. In other words, the historian must be intellectually honest. Sublimating his own views of what ought to have been or should be, he must apply himself to ascertaining what really happened" (Samuel Eliot Morison, "Faith of a Historian," *American Historical Review*, January, 1951).

In "ascertaining what really happened," Mr. Horgan has fallen short both in accuracy of facts and soundness of interpretation. These failures stem from an inadequate bibliography. The general studies listed are not sufficient for a good grounding in the history of New Spain as a foundation

for his attempted interpretation of the Rio Grande in history, and specific studies were overlooked that would have prevented many a factual mistatement. I recall, Dear Lady, that Stanley Walker closed his review of *Great River* with the query, "Pretty, but is it history?" It is sometimes pretty, but it is not good history.

Affectionately yours

PS: If the publisher reprints *Great River*, consideration should be given to the following: Leyda de Bonilla should read Leyva (or Leyba), p. 159. The quotation on p. 218 should probably read, "you will detain him," rather than "detail" him. Mesina river should be changed to Medina, p. 472. "When the centralists entered Revilla . . .," should read when the "federalists" entered, p. 562. Harland should be Howland, p. 577. "Their ranks were broken and hundreds of them moved down . . .;" I suspect this should read "mowed down," p. 684.