

1947

Book Reviews

University of New Mexico Press

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Recommended Citation

University of New Mexico Press. "Book Reviews." *New Mexico Quarterly* 17, 1 (1947). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol17/iss1/26>

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BOOK REVIEWS

Mexico South: The Isthmus of Tehuantepec, by Miguel Covarrubias; paintings and drawings by the author; photographs by Rose Covarrubias, the author, and others. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946. \$7.50.

Since that day in 1923 when an unknown Mexican named Miguel Covarrubias landed in New York with a portfolio of caricatures under his arm and a small government scholarship as his only means of support, he has continuously amazed and delighted an ever-growing audience. Indeed, *amazing* is the only word for this man. Blithely unconscious of their existence, he has broken all the rules. Not for him any long, Horatio-Alger struggle for recognition in the world's most impersonal metropolis. On the contrary, an exhibition at the Whitney Club established him immediately as an outstanding caricaturist, prominent people sought him out, *Vanity Fair* invited him to become a contributor, and the *New Yorker* began to run a weekly sketch signed in rough printing, "Covarrubias."

During his first four years in New York, he did an amazing—that word again!—amount of work, including the publication of two books, the designing of three ballets, contributions to many magazines, and the planning of the scenery and costumes for Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion*. The publication of *The Prince of Wales and Other Famous Americans* in 1925 "opened the doors of fame to him," according to one biographer. That statement, however, is lacking in accuracy. The door was already open. *The Prince of Wales* merely kicked it off its hinges.

In 1937, with the publication of *The Island of Bali*, he smashed more rules, completely destroying the time-honored ideas that no foreigner can ever write acceptably in our language and that no artist, foreign or native, can write anyway. In *The Island of Bali*, he combined his art with a strong, readable prose that established the book, according to the *Nation*, as "a real contribution to literature." Now comes *Mexico South* to strengthen and reaffirm the place he has made for himself among the literati.

Mexico South is a handsome book in the Borzoi tradition, wherein beauty of format is well matched with richness of content. Within its bright pink covers are 429 pages of material covering every phase of the life of the Indians of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Covarrubias displays a remarkable archaeological and ethnological knowledge of these Indians,

as well as a deep and sympathetic understanding of their present-day problems. He traces their history, in text and chart, from Pre-Olmec days to the present time. He describes their work, their play, their speech, their family life, their beliefs and superstitions—in short, their innermost soul. He even includes a glossary of one hundred and twenty Indian words in seven different languages spoken on the Isthmus.

The text is immeasurably enriched by the many illustrations the author has lavished upon it. Besides the eight full-page color plates of Isthmus Indians, there are almost one hundred line drawings and chapter heads that illustrate everything from the finds in various archaeological sites to the designs of embroidery made by the women. Another valuable addition is a double album of photographs, made by the author and his wife, one on the art and archaeology of Mexico and another of present-day scenes and people throughout Tehuantepec.

The quality of the writing is exceptionally high for a person composing in a secondary tongue. It must be admitted that it is at times journalistic, even slangy, but always the reader has a sense of a powerful, driving personality behind the pen. There are other times, too, when the author achieves unusual strength of expression. A good example is a description, early in the book, of a regional dance of Vera Cruz, in which the word picture is intensified and dramatized by his artistic reaction to the rhythm of music and movement. The artist speaks, too, in the accurate depiction of detail and in the use of color words, as when he describes "magenta sugar cane" or houses of "unusual shades of pale salmon, ocher, or cerulean blue."

An art critic of the London *Times*, discussing the art of Covarrubias, once observed that "the color is rich and haunting, the work is full of vitality." Exactly the same statement may be applied to his writing. It is no wonder, then, that *Mexico South* is one of the most beautiful and outstanding of the books of 1946.

THELMA CAMPBELL

Life in Mexico during a Residence of Two Years in that Country, by Madame Calderón de la Barca; with an introduction by Henry Baerlein. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1946. \$5.00.

In the spate of books on Mexico that has flooded our presses, one of the earliest of them all still rides the crest. It was in 1843 that Madame Calderón de la Barca, wife of the first Spanish envoy to the Mexican Republic, published *Life in Mexico*. "It consists of letters," said William H. Prescott in a preface to the book, "written to the members of her own family, and, *really*, not intended originally—however incredible the assertion—for publication. Feeling a regret that such rich stores of instruction and amusement . . . should be reserved for the eyes of a few friends only, I strongly recommended that they should be given to the world. . . ."

We may be grateful to Prescott for his insistence, for without it we should have been deprived of one of the liveliest and most enduring ac-

counts of Mexico ever written. Madame Calderón was in the country from 1839 to 1842, yet many of her observations are as accurate today as they were then. Life has become more ordered, modern improvements have changed the faces of the cities, airplanes swoop to the landing fields, but one needs only to read the descriptions of the Indians thronging the *plazas* to be transported in memory to the Mexico of today. Keen observation, accurate recording, and a critical sense of values were contributing factors to the lasting quality of this book. It was not by accident that General Scott used Madame Calderón's book as a guide when he entered that land in 1847.

"Life in Mexico" has been reprinted many times, the first American edition of Dutton and Company coming out in 1931. This last reprint in 1946 was sponsored by the Junior League of Mexico City. The League has done us a real service in placing this old favorite again upon our library shelves.

THELMA CAMPBELL

Latin-American Civilization: Colonial Period, by Bailey W. Diffie, with the assistance of Justine Whitfield Diffie. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Sons, 1945. \$4.50.

Much-needed books on special phases of Latin-American life, history, and civilization are now appearing with some regularity—books by experts in a particular field. How different are these books from those that flooded the markets a few years back—books written by overnight "specialists" who, after spending a few hours or days in each of the capitals of the Latin-American countries, returned to the United States to write a book.

Latin-American Civilization by Bailey W. Diffie is, fortunately, a book written by a specialist. The book, limited to the colonial period, is divided into three parts—Part One: Foundation of Latin-America (the Indian civilization, the European conquests, land, labor, mining, religion and the Church, manufacturing, trade, culture, government); Part Two: The Evolution of Colonial Latin America to 1810 (expansion and agricultural development, development of education, development of the Church, government in evolution); and, Part Three: Colonial Brazil (Brazil in formation, Portuguese expansion, mining, manufacturing, society and culture, the Church in Brazil, colonial Brazilian government).

Latin-American Civilization gives a thorough, accurate, and comprehensive picture of Latin-American civilization during the colonial period. It is an easy source for information on any of the above-mentioned phases of colonial life in Latin America.

ALBERT R. LOPES

The Argentine Republic, by Ysabel F. Rennie. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945. \$4.00.

Since the initiation of the "Good Neighbor Policy" and particularly since the 1942 Rio Conference, Argentina has been to the American people

the Latin-American country of greatest interest. The reason is well known. During the War, the Republic of La Plata not only refused to join the Allies but "flirted" with the Axis and lent aid to Fascism. Coercive measures were necessary before that nation finally jumped on the band wagon and participated—formally, at least—in the war effort. All this explains why there have been published in the United States in the last few years more books, pamphlets, and articles about Argentina than on any other Iberoamerican country. Of all this abundant literature, Miss Rennie's work is among the most interesting and complete.

The author, well versed in the language and history of Argentina, has observed for herself. Her conclusions are based on facts and are not forced on the reader without his being required to think for himself. The first part of *The Argentine Republic* is an historic and geographic introduction which provides, for the average reader, the background necessary to approach the present problems. The author has used Argentine sources, principally sociological and historic. One notes the influence of Sarmiento, Mitre, Bunge, and Ingenieros. The last part covers Argentina's domestic and international policies during the past war.

A chapter of real sociological merit concerns the conditions of the working classes. The study of political changes is of great interest for one desiring to understand the internal factors which have influenced Argentina's international policy. However, the author does not devote sufficient attention to the role of the army as a group or class in the *coups d'état* of 1930 and 1943. There is only the description of the events, not a study of the social forces involved. We believe that such a study should have been given with the other social factors in the chapter, "Argentine on the Eve." The book does not take into account the influence of the cultural centers on the politico-social development. The social panorama ought to be completed with the study of Argentine thought, and above all with that great source of expression of Iberoamerican social problems, the contemporary novel.

In spite of everything, the book is most interesting and ought to be read by all who would like to understand the actual internal conditions and the psychology of the government of the only Latin-American country that has defied United Nations policy by accrediting a new ambassador to Spain after the United Nations agreement that the members close their Madrid embassies.

MIGUEL JORRIN

The Last Trek of the Indians, by Grant Foreman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946. \$4.00.

In this volume Grant Foreman concludes his history of those Indian tribes now residing in Oklahoma. In *Indian Removal: the Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes*, he recorded the history of the displacement of five tribes who lived south of the Ohio River and of their settlement in the Indian Territory. In the present volume he has written of the removal of

those tribes originally inhabiting lands to the north of the Ohio. "They had not preserved their tribal integrity as the southern Indians did, and there was little homogeneity among them. Their removal was haphazard, not co-ordinated, and wholly unsystematized." The removal of certain tribes west of the Mississippi to the Indian Territory is also described.

The point of view is that of the historian trained in the use of documents, rather than that of the ethnographer trained in describing the ways of life of primitive peoples and in transcribing their oral traditions. With great skill the author has drawn together from many sources the fabric of his narrative: from correspondence in state historical societies, from Congressional documents, from reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, as well as from other sources. Mr. Foreman's legal training and his work on the Dawes Commission in the early days of the century have eminently qualified him for his present task. Hundreds of treaties from the very first one made with the Delaware in 1778 up through those made over a hundred years later with the Quapaw are reviewed.

The story of broken treaties, bribery, the sale of liquor to Indians as a technique of exploitation, and mismanagement on the part of the Indian Bureau is known to many laymen, social scientists, and government administrators of this day. Mr. Foreman's dispassionate account makes this book all the stronger.

The romantic title of the volume is almost the only sentimental note in the entire book, and no doubt has snagged many an unwary book buyer. Another concession to the reading public is the grouping of the footnotes at the end of the chapter, necessitating the flipping of pages back and forth which this reviewer finds distracting.

It is regrettable that Mr. Foreman depends so completely on the *Handbook of American Indians*, published in 1912, for his ethnographic data. A selective use of the papers of Dorsey, Fletcher, Bushnell, and Swanton, to name but a few, would have provided the author with a cross-cultural point of view which would make the book a richer history. An account of broken treaties is only the first lesson to be learned from a history of white-Indian relations. The fact that human values in their cultural context were ignored by those dealing with the Indians is the important lesson for the social scientist.

JOHN ADAIR

Not With the Fist, by Ruth D. Tuck. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1946. \$3.00.

This work, a study of persons of Mexican descent and extraction in a California city, called "Descanso" by the author, is a splendid clinical specimen of the virtues and inadequacies of "the study": sympathetic and synthetic, factual and fatuous, mildly critical and excessively careful. The horns of the dilemma of those who write about minority peoples are getting longer, sharper, more coiled.

The demands of fairness, objectivity, and detachment are more self-defeating than ever before. Social scientists have developed more airs than the clinical psychologists: the cool eye, the steady intelligence, the formidable devices for never antagonizing. The result is always the same: absolute innocuousness.

Ruth Tuck, however, has given her work more solidity and more warmth than is common in such studies. For one thing, she says "Mexican" and "Mexican-American" instead of the pseudo-genteel "Latin-American." She reproduces comments from the dominant groups which evoke anything but the revolting inanities of the professional pan-americanists. Occasionally, also, the juice of her material breaks through her own judicious chronicling, and you get a glimpse of the predicament of the sons and daughters of Mexicans without benefit of social theory or social work cordiality.

The author took the title for this work from an observation of the sociologist, Charles Horton Cooley:

In the same way wrongs that afflict society are seldom willed by anyone or any group, but are by-products of acts of will having other objects; they are done, as someone has said, with the elbows rather than the fists.

There are, presumably, many ways of looking at human relations and human communities. In our time, though, to be preoccupied with the unwilling, unconscious forces which afflict human societies is hardly instructive. Elbows can hurt too, as well as the boot and the heel and the dexterous police.

VINCENT GAROFFOLO

The Winged Serpent: an Anthology of American Indian Prose and Poetry, edited, with an introductory essay, by Margot Astrov. New York: The John Day Company, 1945. \$3.50.

Anthropologists and a few laymen of perception have long known that American Indian folklore included a large body of material which can be simply and correctly referred to as "art," without any qualifying "folk" or "primitive" before the noun. Until now, however, this prose and verse has been buried in expensive, scarce volumes, now and then fragmentarily presented in more general works, and lost in the welter of quaint folk-stuff of no interest.

The Winged Serpent is long overdue. It is a sensitive, and more important, a restrained anthology of selections from the Arctic Circle to Peru. A nice-looking book at a reasonable price issued by a commercial publisher, it should have the distribution it deserves on its literary merits—minus the effects of the reading public's prejudice against anything Indian.

Mrs. Astrov's introduction is excellent. It should prove interesting in its own right to all readers of poetry, and make easy the understanding of Indian poetic forms and content. It errs in underrating the strength of

Christianity among our Pueblo Indians and the tribes of Mexico and Central America. A serious omission is a failure to discuss the Peyote Religion, that curious product of Christianity and despair, or to include any Peyote songs.

Incidentally, Mrs. Astrov has coined a term for the Pueblo Indians, *Puebloños*, which should be discarded immediately. That term in Spanish means "boor" or "rube." The use of *Pueblo* as both adjective and noun is established in Spanish as in English.

In view of the great mass of material from which it was made, the selection must have been extremely difficult. Mrs. Astrov is to be admired for the general quality of her choices, and for having had the strength not to include more. The anthology is subject to one major criticism, however. Too much space is given to the areas of lesser literary achievement, at the expense of the great civilizations and of such more primitive groups, like the Navajo, of outstanding literary ability. There are, for instance, only four selections from the Navajo, including only one short prose passage. Seventeen pages are given to the California tribes, whose material is nice folk stuff but hardly art; *eight* pages to the great civilizations and modern tribes of Central America. The latter selections are entirely from the Yucatecan-speaking Maya; there is nothing from the magnificent writings of the Quichés and Cakchiqueles, or from the nations outside the Mayan area.

This error may have stemmed from a desire to represent as many tribes as possible—a remnant of the anthropological approach, which on the whole Mrs. Astrov has controlled well. Even so, it is far more important to represent the Quichés, for instance, than the Yokuts or Wishok of California. Representation, tribally speaking, should be a very minor consideration. If the American public is to be convinced that the Indians created literature worthy of serious consideration, they must have an anthology filled with such literature. *The Winged Serpent* cannot be considered merely as an anthology; it is also an argument against opposition. Judged even by this harder standard, it is a noteworthy success.

OLIVER LA FARGE

The White Roots of Peace, by Paul A. W. Wallace. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946. \$2.00.

In his little book Paul A. W. Wallace presents the legend of Degana-widah and the founding of the Iroquois Confederacy of five eastern Indian tribes. This league for peace has existed for five centuries, and its provisions have been set down from oral legend only recently. As an object-lesson to more "civilized" peoples who are trying to establish a union of nations for peace, the book has a curious and ironic implication.

ALAN SWALLOW

The Seven Cities of Gold, by Virginia Hersch. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946. \$2.50.

In this novel Miss Hersch has done what someone was bound to do sooner or later: she has fictionized the disillusionment and endless hazards Coronado and his men suffered in their quest of the fabulous kingdoms of Quivira, Tontontecac, Marata, and others in which great riches were said to exist. It was a flamboyant adventure, this enterprise which originated in the audacious brain of Antonio de Mendoza. And Coronado was a flamboyant man. Also proud and ambitious conquistadors, his men followed him in the same spirit.

The reading of fictionized history makes one question the validity of the ordinary education which makes of history a dull task composed of memorizing names and dates instead of the exciting world that an historical romance may open. As the title suggests, *The Seven Cities of Gold* is an adventure with the conquistadors; however, it will be valued as a factual record of the unfulfilled hopes of Coronado, Antonio de Mendoza, and others whose names have a familiar ring to every literate person. In this story about these adventurers we acquire much information concerning the aspect of the country which they traversed; we learn the facts about those who set out from Mexico amidst pomp and ceremony and who returned a tattered army to taste the bitter cup of failure and disillusionment.

The plot is simple and certainly artificial. Carlos Enrique Gomez y Miruelo tells the story. He joins the expedition of 1540-1542 to gain honor and glory and thus win the lovely Cristabella Dolores Isabella de Ahumada y Dominguez de Salamanca. Conflict enters his mind when he finds himself attracted to Anita; she is his helpmate in the anxieties, marches, battles, and victories of the arduous expedition as was Marina to Cortes. In the background are the things that made the pattern of life for the Spaniards seeking to verify the stories of Cabeza de Vaca and the Franciscan Friar Marcos de Niza: thirst, exhaustion, disease, suffering, crossing mountains and deserts, and perishing in winter storms.

This novel lacks not only a skillfully wrought story or an intricate pattern but also a penetrating study of individual characters. The milieu is vague and indifferent; the people are unconvincing and curiously uninteresting; they seem more like silhouettes than three-dimensional swash-bucklers and natives of the Southwest.

No comment on this book would be adequate without mention of the liberal use of Spanish expressions. They are used wisely and casually so that their presence enriches the novel.

Before concluding my review, I may point out several errors which should be corrected in future editions: *Tuysan* should read *Tusayan*; *haciendado* (p. 159) should be *hacendado*.

The plan of the book is a good one. Despite occasional brilliant writing, keen perceptions, and what might have been a colorful story, the novel dwindles away and does not make a very definite impression. At times the

whole story moves haltingly, lingering too long over geographical and historical information and scanting or skipping more colorful scenes and powerful characterization. There are many intelligently rendered pictures, but as a whole *The Seven Cities of Gold* is not a completely satisfactory novel.

EDNA LUE FURNESS

Our Son Pablo, by Alvin and Darley Gordon. New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1946. \$2.75.

Alvin and Darley Gordon went to Mexico and to Michoacan, where they did some documentary films. One in particular was the re-enactment of the Mexican government's scheme to teach the rural, largely Indian people to read and write Spanish, the native tongue. Associated with them in their work was Nacho, representing the Department of Indian Affairs, and Pablo, a Tarascan Indian, an assistant and interpreter. After the filming was over in the little town of Arantepakua, the Gordons prepared to leave Mexico. They soon found themselves attached to and adopted by Pablo whose compelling ambition to study in the "free" U. S. A., that he might return to help his people, they made possible. They arranged for his coming to California, his entrance into the University at Berkeley; and after many difficulties he arrived.

His English was but a few words, his background a rural, somewhat primitive village in another country. Yet this lad Pablo lived with the Gordons, learned a foreign language and the routine of a foreign university, made friends among the students and professors, came to know classical music, posed for an artist—whose portrait of him hung in a public show—and learned something of the social customs and mechanized gadgets of an American home.

With the draft difficulties of the war, he went back to Mexico to continue his education at the National University in Mexico City. The Gordons, concerned for Pablo and his readjustment, visited him and went with him, "their son," to the native village in the mountains of Michoacan. Here Pablo's family and village gave them a *fiesta*. Here they saw the devastation and desolation wrought by the volcano, Paracutin, and here they realized the position of Pablo, soon to be a *maestro* and a leader of his people. Perhaps he would be the one who might someday be forced to bring this folk into a new home; for the lands, held for 400 years, were being covered by gray volcanic ash, and the corn struggled to grow.

Told in delightful style the book is an absorbing tale of the play and contrast of one culture upon another. Pablo's letters are the key; and we see in him the personification of changes that come through education and again the age-old, bitterly poignant conflict of the minority when Pablo realizes that in his home land he is an Indian. Yet with his training, experience, and understanding, he is to be a *maestro* and work with anthropologists for better conditions for his own people.

DOROTHY WOODWARD

Selected Poems by Pablo Neruda, translated by Angel Flores. Privately printed, 1944. No price indicated.

Residence on Earth and Other Poems, by Pablo Neruda, translated by Angel Flores. Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1946. \$3.50.

After having given us a group of excellent translations of the outstanding poems of Pablo Neruda contained in the two volumes, *Residencia en la Tierra* and *España en el Corazón*, Angel Flores completes his task in this volume issued by New Directions. In it he collects the poems he had previously translated and published in a limited private edition, and adds others from *Residencia en la Tierra* and *España en el Corazón* as well as some of the last ones produced by the great Chilean poet. Among them are several important fragments of his *Canto General de Chile*.

The importance of this translation of Angel Flores rests, in the first place, in the fidelity with which the poems have been done into a language so different from the original. A difficult matter this, for the rich symbolism of Neruda's poetry, the substantive value that metaphor takes on in it, resist all effort at translation for one unaccustomed to similar tasks. It is possible that Angel Flores would not have been able to overcome these difficulties so happily if he had not been prepared for it by his knowledge of T. S. Eliot and his translations of Eliot's poems into Spanish. In the poetry of Neruda, and in that of Eliot, is expressed a sense of destruction, of the breakup of things, manifested by a proliferation of images apparently contradictory and even incoherent, capable of causing the average reader—or the unaccustomed translator—to despair. At times Flores has had to sacrifice literalness in order to preserve the sense of the verses—a laudable practice.

Another reason for the importance of this translation, for the person who reads English, is that it shows up clearly the parallel between the poetry of Pablo Neruda and that of T. S. Eliot, the most representative poets of their time in their respective languages. Both express the anguish of contemporary man confronted by the chaos of his environment in crisis. In the works of these poets that anguish before the critical situation is manifested by what Leo Spitzer calls "the chaotic enumeration," a train of symbolic images, of objects which indicate a deeper reality, all linked together, as when Neruda writes:

It is feet and clocks and fingers
and a locomotive of moribund soap,
and a sour sky of damp metal,
and a yellow river of smiles,

Spitzer, who has studied, or at least pointed out this chaotic enumeration in Neruda and in Claudel, has not done so, however, in Eliot. And this is nevertheless one of the most significant formal aspects of the work of the poet in English which brings him closest to the Chilean poet.

But whoever strives to trace the parallel between Eliot and Neruda

will have to show the difference in direction to which they have been brought by their diverging poetic evolution. Eliot has ended in a religiosity bristling with suggestions of scholasticism; Neruda is the outstanding voice of Spanish poetry based upon the Marxist conception of the world. Beginning with the poems of *España en el Corazón*, the enumeration, which is chaotic whenever he wishes to express the bankruptcy of society, becomes organic, coherent, when hope is the theme. Now in *Canto General de Chile*; he discards the melancholy of his first verses and the chaos of *Residence on Earth* and sings:

Together in the face of the sob!
At the high hour
of earth and perfume, look at this face
just emerged from the terrible salt,
look into this bitter mouth that smiles,
look at this new heart that greets you
with its overflowing flower, determined and golden,

and it is now that the poet has really established his "residence on earth."

JOSE ANTONIO PORTUONDO
(Review translated by R. M. Duncan)

Ensayos de Poesía Lírica, by J. R. Wilcock. Buenos Aires: Imprenta Lopez, 1945. No price indicated.

This book of Juan Rodolfo Wilcock is an excellent example of that group of poets called by César Fernández Moreno, the "Group of 1940." The modest title of *Ensayos de Poesía Lírica* well expresses the attempt to seek and try out new methods which has characterized the young poets of Argentina. The use of the sonnet, the *lira*, the couplet, the *serventesio*, of the classical metres and strophes in short which we find here, reveals that this search, this tryout, includes a revision and criticism of the traditional methods which to a great extent involves a return to them.

This return also appears in the themes. In this book of Wilcock's the poetry seems to deal essentially with one: love. We here have to do with poetry in a minor key, mildly sentimental and romantic. The poet sings of his love in classical metres with scarcely a single bold image, of the many that remain as a heritage of the surrealist moment, to disturb the limpidity of verses which recognize the evocative power of everyday things. Life in constant change, death, solitude, absence, twilight, memory, landscapes, gardens, the memories of provincial life, all themes dear to romanticism, are reborn in these verses—but without untidy passion, without emphasis—gently. Perhaps the poet wished to take refuge in this sentimental pool as an escape from the hard struggle of his times. Or perhaps he seeks here only a moment of repose that he may return with renewed spirit to the battle which gives no quarter.

JOSE ANTONIO PORTUONDO

Contemporary Spanish Poetry: Selections from Ten Poets, translated by Eleanor L. Turnbull with Spanish originals and Personal Reminiscences of the Poets by Pedro Salinas. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1945. \$3.50.

Once more we are indebted to Eleanor Turnbull for an excellent selection of poems translated with taste and skill. In this book she presents the most representative Spanish poets from a generation which to a very great extent has sought inspiration from a re-examination of the poetry of Góngora. It is a tragic generation too, dispersed by what Pedro Salinas calls an "unclean and evil wind," for since the Spanish Civil War most of them are in exile. It is our good fortune that several have found a haven in the United States.

Of the group Federico García Lorca is the best known—as he well deserves to be. The selections from his work begin with the "Canción del jinete," which seems now prophetic to us because there we read of death lying in wait for him beneath the walls of Córdoba. This poem is an excellent example of Miss Turnbull's art.

RIDER'S SONG

Córdoba.

Distant and lonely.

Black my pony, full the moon
and olives stowed in my saddle-bags.
Though well I may know the way
I'll never arrive at Córdoba.

Across the plain, through the wind,
black my pony, red the moon,
stark death is staring at me
from the tall towers of Córdoba.
Alas, how long is the way!
Alas, for my brave black pony!
Alas, stark death awaits me
before I arrive at Córdoba!

Córdoba.

Distant and lonely.

Another of García Lorca's famous poems, "Romance de la Guardia Civil Española," will give an idea of the problems that a translator has to contend with.

Los caballos negros son.
Las herraduras son negras.
Sobre las capas relucen
manchas de tinta y de cera.

In English this becomes

Black, all black are their horses
and black also their horseshoes.
Over their dark coats glisten
spots of ink and of wax.

The rhythm, balance, and contrast of "negros son" and "son negras" suffers by the substitution of "horses," "horseshoes," and the extra "black" thrown in as a kind of refrain. (The gutturals of "dark coats glisten" may be intentional but are certainly difficult to pronounce.)

Admirers of García Lorca will be grateful for the inclusion of "Sorpresa," but surely "No one could look down into his eyes" is a mistranslation of "Nadie pudo asomarse a sus ojos."

One wishes that Miss Turnbull would turn to rhyme more often. It helps to carry the translation often if a figure has to be sacrificed and in part compensates for the loss of assonance which is used by all of these poets most of the time. She proves her competence in several translations. The one of Moreno Villa's "El Fuego" is an example (though perhaps "purifier" and "mystifier" do not here work out as well as one could wish).

FIRE

A heavenly thing is fire,
and when it departs, the earth
is naught, disappears entire.

The earth gives us good fruits, rye,
water and shelter; but fire
is not a mere plant that grows
in arable land at desire.

It is something lent to us.
A heavenly thing is fire.

To-morrow will be triumphant,
joyful, when the purifier
comes to your soul. With a thousand
salaams and caresses aspire
so detain it lest it flee. . .

for a heavenly thing is fire,
fleeting as the air and light,
and an unknown mystifier. . .

None of these poets is more like Góngora than Jorge Guillén. "El ruisenior" belongs to the Góngora tradition. (The book mistakenly has "Por Don Luis de Góngora" instead of "A Don Luis de Góngora.")

EL RUISEÑOR
A DON LUIS DE GONGORA

El ruiseñor, pavo real
Facilísimo del pío,
Envía su memorial
Sobre la curva del río,
Lejos, muy lejos, a un día
Parado en su mediodía,
Donde un ave carmesí,
Cenit de una primavera
Redonda, perfecta esfera,
No responde nunca: sí.

THE NIGHTINGALE

The nightingale, fluent songster,
A very peacock of trilling,
Is sending forth his petition
Over the bend of the river,
Far, far away, to a day
Held suspended at noontide,
Where a bird of glowing crimson,
Zenith of a perfect spring,
The completely rounded sphere,
Never, never answers: yes.

"La Nieve" is also well translated.

SNOW

Over the green lies the white
And, sings.
Snow that is fine would like
To drift high.

January is alight with snow: or green,
Or white.
May it shed light by day and by night,
The snow most bright.

Delicate snowflakes, feathery snow?
What fire the drifts hold!
The snow, the snow in the hands,
In the soul.

So pure is the fire in the white,
 So pure without flame.
 The snow, the snow up to song
 Would attain.

January is alight with the sylvan snow.
 What fire! And it sings.
 The snow reaches up to song—the snow, the snow—
 For flight it is winged!

Only seven of the Salinas poems duplicate translations that Miss Turnbull had already presented in *Lost Angel and Other Poems* which appeared a few years ago. I should like to see more of them here but I suppose a person interested can go to the other book. A good example is "Suelo":

Soil. Nothing more
 Soil. Nothing less.
 And let that suffice you.
 Because on the soil the feet are planted,
 on the feet the body erect,
 on the body the head firm,
 and there, in the lee of the forehead,
 pure idea and in the pure idea
 the tomorrow, the key
 —to-morrow—of the eternal.
 Soil. No more no less.
 And let that suffice you.

Excellent selections appear also from the works of José Moreno Villa, Gerardo Diego, Rafael Alberti, Emilio Prados, Vicente Aleixandre, Luis Cernuda, and Manuel Altolaguirre.

A number of typographical errors have crept in; among them are "manuel" for "manual" on page 8, "par" for "para" on page 61, "Cunado" for "Cuando" twice on page 218.

And finally it would be an injustice to the reader to omit mention of the fine presentation of biographical data supplied by Pedro Salinas. He does not write specifically about himself, to be sure, but he betrays himself in every paragraph with the result that we have a fairly intimate picture of what all ten poets are like as persons to supplement Miss Turnbull's presentation of their poetry.

R. M. DUNCAN

The Sea and the Hills: the Harz Journey and the North Sea, by Heinrich Heine; translated by Frederic T. Wood. Boston: Chapman and Grimes, Inc., 1946. \$2.50.

During the Nazi regime the writings of Heinrich Heine were unceremoniously thrown into the fire, but his famous song, "Die Lorelei," was so

deeply imbedded in the German imagination that it could not be left out of the song book of the Hitler Jugend, in which it was labelled "Author Unknown." But in these days, when the works of great men are scattered in all the libraries of the world, it is no more possible to forget Heine's delightful prose, written on a walking tour through the Harz Mountains, and his striking poems of the North Sea coast, than it is to forget the imagery of the *Psalms*, which Heine heard in the synagogue of his childhood, or the beat of the surf which had thundered in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, which the lad had studied in his "gymnasium" days.

Professor Frederic T. Wood, now professor of Germanic languages at the University of Virginia, has reproduced the charm of Heine's work in a careful translation that actually makes Heine a contemporary. No one who has not struggled with translating a foreign language into his mother tongue has much realization of the difficulties encountered in such a task. Luther, in seeking to vindicate his translation of the Bible into a living German for the times, says of these difficulties: "In translating, I have busied myself with this: to be able to present pure and clear German. And it often happened that we sought for and asked about a single word, for fourteen days, three or four weeks, and still sometimes did not find it." How long Professor Wood toiled to present pure and clear English, one cannot say, but in comparing the German and the English, one cannot escape the impression that the matter has been pondered with great care.

Heine, disgusted with the academic aridity of Göttingen and rusticated because of an attempted duel that was forced on him, turns his back upon the university, and "takes to the hills" upon a hiking tour through the neighboring Harz Mountains.

I have always wondered how one would translate Heine's sarcastic expression, "mit dem Rücken." "Die stadt selbst ist schön und gefaellt einem am besten, werm man sie mit dem Rücken anseht." Here Professor Wood translates very closely: "The town itself is pretty, being most pleasing when one looks at it with the back." Did Heine here intend to be really vulgar? He can be rough, but for my students I translate, "The town, itself beautiful, pleases one best when one views it over his shoulders"; that is, "it's a good place to be from." By the way, the translation of this passage by E. B. Ashton reads: "The town itself is beautiful, and very pleasing to look at, if you have turned your back." These are difficult phrases for any translator.

Heine's disgust with the pedantry at Göttingen is elaborated in his remarks (p. 4) about an imaginary omission in the guide book of one K. F. H. Marx, regarding the suggestion that the women of Göttingen have "too big feet."

I have, indeed, occupied myself for many a day with an earnest refutation of this opinion; for this purpose I have heard lectures on comparative anatomy, excerpted the rarest works in the library, studied for hours on Weende Street the feet of the passing ladies, and in the very learned treatise, which will contain the results of these studies, I shall speak 1. of feet in general, 2. of the feet of the ancients, 3.

of the feet of elephants, 4. of the feet of the women of Göttingen; 5. I shall collect everything that has been said about these feet in Ullrich's Garden; 6. I shall consider these feet in their relations to one another and shall expatiate at this point on calves, knees, etc., and finally, 7. if I can only get hold of paper long enough, I shall add some copper plates with facsimiles of the feet of Göttingen ladies. (pp. 21, 22)

The translation here catches Heine's sarcasm perfectly.

As Heine penetrates further into the hills and is overcome by the beauty and the spirit of forest and mountain, he forgets the sorrow and the bitterness of the weary days when he was wrestling with the study of jurisprudence, which he loathed, instead of having a free hand to study literature and philosophy and to write as his heart dictated; hence he often writes with great sincerity of feeling.

His Harz Mountains journey gives rise to one of the most charming travel diaries of all time, in which the beauty of nature, interestingly humorous and keen observations on his fellow travellers, and satiric asides are mingled in startling and surprising fashion.

It also remained for this Hebrew-Hellenic-Christian poet to become Germany's greatest poet of the sea. Going to the sandy beaches of the coast of the North Sea, fringed by the Frisian Islands, in search of health and rest, he felt the many moods of the mighty deep possess his sensitive spirit, and he gives us sea poems that have few equals. England, surrounded on all sides by the ever-changing ocean, gives us much sea-poetry; Germany, with so little sea line, and that so monotonous, gives us very little.

In translating the sea-poems, Professor Wood has a more difficult task than in the *Harz-Reise*, for he translates poetry into poetry, a real test. The work is excellently done. Heine coins new words and epithets, very suggestive, but not easy to handle in English. In "Sunset" (p. 101), "licht-fuenkchen" becomes "light-sparklets"; "tiny sparks of light" might sound more English, but that would be difficult to put into a line of poetry.

It is not always possible to be literal enough to give the expressive word and still at the same time make clear English plus good poetry. On page 102, at the end of the German stanza are the words

Und unerbitterlich eilt er hinab
In sein flutenkaltes Witwerbett.

From this Professor Wood makes

And not to be moved he hastens down
To his wat'ry-cold and lonely bed.

It is these German compounds that make hard work for the translator. Here it is literally:

And not to be moved (or, pitilessly) he hastens below
To his watery-cold (cold as the flood) *widower's-bed*.

At the end of the same poem the translator meets this problem. He renders

But I, then, the man
 The lowly-planted, by *death well-favored*,
 I'll grumble no longer.

The German for the words in my italics is one compound: "tod-beglückte." The poet, unlike the sun god Sol, who must go on unceasingly, has the good fortune—"glueck"—to be subject to death—"tod." His pain, his suffering, his *Weltschmerz* can have an end. Does the translator's expression make the meaning clear? These samples show the extreme difficulty of translation. At times one would really have to paraphrase at length in prose to secure absolute clarity.

Professor Wood has given us indeed a "fresh," yes, a refreshing translation, which the reader who knows no German can read with genuine pleasure, with the added assurance that he has really understood the complex spirit of Heine ever "wandering between two worlds."

C. H. S. KOCH

There Were Two Pirates, by James Branch Cabell. New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, Inc., 1946. \$2.50.

In this "comedy of division" Mr. Cabell again has written of man's dreams, their ironical fulfillment, and the eventual acceptance of comfortable reality. The action is full of realized possibilities for ironical contrast and productive of several themes already familiar in *Poictesme*. So that he may marry Isabel de Castro, Lieutenant José Gasparilla of the Spanish Navy leads a mutiny, shoots his commanding officer, and embarks on a career of piracy. As conscienceless as Jurgen or Manuel, José plunders the merchantmen of the Caribbean, murdering all who resist and, although his "heart" remains faithful to Isabel, maintaining a succession of mistresses in order to establish the reputation necessary to successful piracy.

But from his successes and from his pirate kingdom on the west coast of Florida, José takes leave for his boyhood in Spain. Just as in *The Cream of the Jest* the shining lid of a cold cream jar opened the land of dreams to Felix Kennaston, so does a "carved green stone" on a watch fob return José to "the land without shadows." Aboard one of his prizes, José has captured Don Diego de Arredondo and with him his wife, who turns out to be the long-adored Isabel. Once lovely and gentle, Isabel has become "irrational and uncomely and . . . continually fault-finding," but Don Diego loves her devotedly; in face of "the great magic of marriage," he gladly surrenders the magic of the fob to José.

After disposing of his current mistress with a pistol bullet and burying his latest haul of treasure, José returns to his childhood: to his dreams of becoming either a saint or a Provençal poet, and to his first rapturous love for Isabel. But even with the first kiss, the dream and the reality divide. José reverts to manhood and Florida. Florian de Puyssange, we remember, was also disenchanted with reality, as were Manuel and Jurgen, and even Perion when he finally found his Melicent. But while a "new and finer

love" smote Perion, José, like Jurgen, succumbs to the "magic" of marriage and relaxes in comfortable retirement. From Don Diego, conveniently a ghost the past two years, José learns that his shadow, left behind in Florida nine years before, is still a practicing pirate. With his own shadowless character thus left "far above reproach" and with an adequate income of buried treasure, José marries the middle-aged, fat, garrulous, complacent, but solicitous Isabel; and when the shadow, finally cornered by the United States Navy, drowns himself, José is completely free to enjoy an old age of "unassailable respectability." The green stone remains untouched in a bureau drawer.

Often men's dreams do come to nothing, "enduring" love is compromised, wrongs are rationalized away, prudence becomes a substitute for achievement; and the artist properly may treat this universal failure as either tragic or comic. Mr. Cabell maintains the detachment necessary to comedy: the point of view—tolerant and even kindly though it may be—from which aspiration, defeat, and above all compromise may be more laughed at than pitied or hated. José the pirate is ridiculous in the moral glozing he gives his ruthlessness; and the old, no-longer-tempted José is still more absurd in expecting eternal reward for his "piety" and "sober conduct." Yet even in comedy there is a point beyond which sympathies and antipathies can be sacrificed only at the expense of interest. And in *There Were Two Pirates*, I believe, the reader's feeling for José—José the pirate perhaps more than José the child or the old man—must suffer this diminution, so that José's failure and his hypocrisy seem too little the failure and hypocrisy of mankind, and until there are arid stretches where character becomes only manner and—despite the graces of style and structure—humanity and art take second place to ingenuity.

W. P. ALBRECHT

The American: a Middle Western Legend, by Howard Fast. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946. \$3.00.

Already well established as a writer of good historical novels, Mr. Fast makes another contribution in *The American*. This book tells the story of John Peter Altgeld, born of immigrant parents, and of the family's life upon a frontier farm in the Middle West. The lad broke from this clod-like existence to participate in the Civil War, and with vision and determination he returned to the struggle and to secure an education in law.

Inspired by and grounded in democratic principles, he emerged as a leader of the common man: lawyer, judge, and finally governor of Illinois. Here he pardoned the convicted Haymarket anarchists and intensified the conflict between powerful business interests and democratic forces. He took the leadership of the Democratic party from Grover Cleveland, defied the press from the *Chicago Tribune* to the coasts, but was ultimately defeated. Even so this Lincoln-like character stands as a hero, his greatness marked by respect and love in the hearts of his countrymen—the American.

Written in excellent style, the fast moving story carries the reader along

from the very first. Warm and sympathetic in his delineation of the main character, Mr. Fast surrounds the American with historic personages, and they play their parts in an historic background of the emergence of this country from the immigrant farms of virgin prairie soil in the Midwest to the powerful mechanized epoch of the twentieth century.

DOROTHY WOODWARD

The Friendly Persuasion, by Jessamyn West. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945. \$2.50.

It is a source of satisfaction to this journal that some of the first of Jessamyn West's stories appeared in its pages. Since this department had no part in that achievement, it is perhaps pardonable for it to indulge in congratulation—in something of a sense of family pride in *The Friendly Persuasion*. Here in this book is a concentration of the qualities which delighted us in "A Child's Day" or "Pictures from a Clapboard House," the latter forming one of the final chapters in the present book. Here is the gentleness, the kindly and crisp integrity of Miss West's Quakers; here is a re-living of the ways of one's forebears without the nostalgic sentimentality of so many of the "recollective" writers. These Quakers are pious without self-righteousness and with humor, which strikes us as a refreshing and all-too-rare piety in these latter days.

The book is a collection of short stories, really, about the family of the Quaker nurseryman, Jess Birdwell, living near the banks of the Muscatatuck in Indiana. Jess' wife, Eliza, was a Quaker preacher and a thoroughly human person, with the wisdom to know that "when Jess was set he was a problem for the Lord," that Quaker tenets were no match, after all, for the deep-seated love of music which set Jess' mind on the purchase of a Payson and Clarke organ. Like several others, "Music on the Muscatatuck" is Jess' story. "The Battle of Finney's Ford" is a sensitive reading of the problem of his sons, Josh and Labe, when Morgan's raiders threaten the country. Both battle their Quaker principles:

"I purely hate fighting," Josh said. "Don't thee, Labe?"

"Not so much," Labe answered.

"I hate it," Josh said. "That's why I got to."

"And I got not to," Labe said, "because I like it."

There are few better horse races in literature than the First Day race to Meeting between the Reverend Marcus Augustus Godley's Black Prince and Jess' unprepossessing Lady, "who wouldn't be passed." For that matter, there are few more novel or entertaining tales of horse trading than that which tells how Jess acquired Lady. Perhaps the most appealing blend of humor, understanding of a child's nature, and of the simple strength of these people who built their way of life into the land is the story, "The Buried Leaf." Here the young daughter Mattie finds romance and adventure in the account of her pioneer family; and at the same time we find, as

the Birdwells unearth the buried leaf from the Bible, the living memory of other Birdwells' courage and faith as Jess says to Mattie, "I ain't so far from those days not to know a man plowed the earth then with his heart as well as his hands. It ain't always been ingrain carpets and celery vases, Mattie, and thee's not to forget it."

When a finely original, sensitive talent turns to the probing of these people of our land and stirs their roots, there is somehow always richer sustenance for the reader. In a confused present, this past looks clear, its values are more shining, its way of life is winnowed down to essentials whose meaning nourishes us. We are captured not only by the charm with which Jessāmy West writes, although that is an undeniable part of the appeal of the book. The flavor of Quaker speech, the Quaker humor and balance and tolerance are in its every sentence; seldom does a novelist achieve such harmony of expression and subject matter. But here is more than charm: it is respect for her people; it is love for them; it is the sense of their being worth the record. One wonders, laying down this book, if the craving of the 'forties is not principally a persistent hunger for Jess Birdwell and his kind, for people who are not ultimately concerned with ingrain carpets and celery vases.

KATHERINE SIMONS

The Humors and Shakespeare's Characters, by John W. Draper. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1945. \$2.00.

As a summary of the "medical" literature current in Shakespeare's time and as a picture of certain ideas of that day about character types and about the relationship between character or temperament or ruling obsession (humor) and the stars, Professor Draper's book is highly valuable. For the humors did contribute to Shakespeare's store of allusion and imagery, as did, apparently, all aspects of Elizabethan life; and it is always well to know all the elements of that Elizabethan life as completely and in as much detail as possible. When the author, however, begins to intrude the implication that the humoral psychology is the key to a profound reading of Shakespeare's characters, this reader, for one, grows greatly uneasy and ultimately incredulous. I do not believe that it is proved that Shakespeare wrote with the literal humors theory always in the back of his mind, or that Shakespeare's audience found the dramatic characters clarified and simplified by its informal knowledge of the humors. As far as the reader or student of today is concerned, there is hardly a character analysis in the entire book that could not be more satisfactorily and revealingly made in the age-old, plainly moralistic terms of everyday appraisal: hypocrite, dissembler, over-ambitious man, woman divided against herself, villain, melancholy young intellectual, etc., etc.

Grateful as one may be for a certain increase in one's information, one is profoundly glad that Shakespeare did not tie his characterization to a confused body of pseudo-science that went out of fashion in a few years.

DUDLEY WYNN