

Papeles de Bolívar. Edited by Vicente Lecuna. (Caracas: Litografía del Comercio, 1917. Pp. xii, 476.)

This volume constitutes one of the most valuable contributions to the study of that much-discussed man, Simon de Bolívar y Palacios, which has yet appeared. It is a compilation of documents and other material covering the period between 1801 and 1830. They run all the way from the most intimate private letters to various relatives and friends down to public decrees and proclamations. In fact, there is a vast amount of material here for forming a correct estimate of the Liberator's personal qualities and of his policies. Most of the material is derived from Danial F. O'Leary's collection of letters written by Bolívar. In many cases, especially in that of the letters written to Urdaneta and Briceño Mendez, the present editor has used holograph letters; in other instances, O'Leary's copies of the original letters are used. Sr. Lecuna warns us that a number of the latter contain lamentable errors due to the carelessness of the amanuenses, for O'Leary copied only a few letters with his own hand. The material with which Sr. Lecuna worked is preserved in the *Archivo Nacional* at Caracas.

The numerous illustrations of the book take the form of photographic reproductions of portraits and miniatures of Bolívar and his relatives. They are beautifully reproduced, and, indeed, the whole appearance of the book, paper, type, arrangement, and decorations, is of a quality which surpasses many of the books put out by North American presses.

PHILIP AINSWORTH MEANS.

The Quest of El Dorado. By J. A. ZAHM (H. J. Mozans). (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1917. Pp. xiv, 261. Illustrated.)

This small book of 246 pages of text is a reprint, with minor changes and additions, of a series of articles which appeared in 1912 in the Bulletin of the Pan American Union. In it the author describes the more important expeditions in what he calls "the most romantic episode in the history of South American conquest". These range from the *jornadas* of Belalcázar and other companions of Francisco Pizarro, and of the Spaniards and Germans who operated inland from the Caribbean coast, to the mad adventure of Raleigh, and the last enterprises of the Spaniards, before the almost universal credulity of that people gave way to an unwelcome disillusionment. These romantic *gesta* were the fruit of the grandiose Quixotism of the Spanish race, shared by a occasional Elizabethan like Raleigh, and by that German of another

time, Philip von Hutten. Of the city of El Dorado the gullible Englishman wrote: "For the greatnes, for the riches, and for the excellent seate, it farre exceedeth any of the world." But Raleigh was an exception among a people that kept its balance in an age when the imagination was so easily inflamed. As for the Spaniards, no nation contributed so much to the geography of fancy, or clung so tenaciously to the perpetuation of phantom lands on their charts, or, it must be acknowledged, incidentally contributed so much to the more solid knowledge of geography. Besides El Dorado, we may cite among the wills-of-the-wisp which the Spaniard sought so persistently, Quivira and Anian, Rica de Oro and Rica de Plata in the Pacific, the paradise of the Amazons, the Casa del Sol, and the Enchanted City of the Caesars.

Several years ago the Swiss-American archaeologist, Bandelier, told the story of El Dorado in his work on "The Gilded Man", in which he also included an account of various North American counterparts of the search for El Dorado. In Spain Ciro Bayo has popularized the story in his books on the "Leyenda Aurea". However, neither these nor the work of Padre Zahm attempt a thoroughly scientific study of the whole cycle of expeditions. Schuller's monograph on the expedition of Diego de Órdaz is an effort to examine one minor phase of the vast field, which merges at so many points into the realm of legend. It is, of course, this close relation to the fabulous that accounts for much of its fascination for the general reader. That person, for whom this book was clearly written, would not relish the subjection of this epic to the skeptical standards of objective historiography. The treatment of El Dorado has not yet reached this chilling stage of documentation. Some of the tales undoubtedly belong with Mandeville and Benyowsky, or with Marco Polo in his more imaginative moments, or with the myth of "Prester John". According to her autobiography, Doña Catalina de Erauso, the swashbuckling "Nun-Ensign" herself, once went down out of the Andean plateau country into the Land of Cinnamon, on one of the expeditions that went in search of El Dorado.

Padre Zahm has drawn his materials from most of the printed sources, including the important works of Fray Pedro Simón and Padre Juan de Castellanos. Some of these are accessible in translations, like those of the Hakluyt Society, others are only available in Spanish, mostly in reprints of the last century. The stories, which are often so verbose in the original, the author has condensed, and told with a gracious and mellow style. In recounting the prodigious exploits of the expedition which set out under Ursua from Quito, and which was later taken

over by the desperado Aguirre, he sacrifices something of the vividness of the original narrative, evidently for the sake of maintaining the proportion of the narratives. It must, however, be granted that a book cannot well be criticized for the lack of what it does not purport to be.

There are few so well fitted as Padre Zahm to write the story of El Dorado. "Only those", he writes, "who have traversed the regions visited by the dauntless adventurers who took part in the expeditions described in the following pages can fully realize the magnitude of the task which they essayed". He himself has traveled "up the Orinoco and down the Magdalena", "along the Andes and down the Amazon", and "through South America's southland",—to enumerate the titles of three earlier works. That comprehends most of the vast area over which men of the *conquista* period searched for El Dorado. And in most of that region the natural conditions of travel are much as they were in the days of the Pizarros and Quesadas. "They struggled with many obstacles in the shape of mighty rivers and morasses which they could not wade through", says the old chronicle of Gonzalo Pizarro's expedition into the *montaña* country. And again, "On account of the constant waters from above and below, they were always wet, and their clothes rotted, so that they had to go naked. . . . The thorns and undergrowth of those dense forests cruelly tore them, and made them look as if they had been flayed."

As for errors in the book: the early historian was Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, and not Gonzalo Fernando (p. 26); and Gonzalo Pizarro was full brother, and not half-brother, of Francisco (p. 37).

WILLIAM LYTLE SCHURZ.

Santiago de Cuba and its District (1607-1640). Written from Documents in the Archive of the Indies, at Seville, Spain, by I. A. WRIGHT. (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de Felipe Peña Cruz, 1918. Pp. 207, [i]; paper.)

Miss Wright, who has made research concerning the Island of Cuba peculiarly her own, has here furnished another volume to historical students that is, in its greater part, prime source material. The book, as indicated in the title, deals entirely with the eastern part of the island, and is divided into two parts. The first part of sixty-four pages, is (with the exception of the preliminary pages) a short discussion of the activities of the governors of the district for the period 1607-1640, namely, Juan de Villaverde Ureta, Francisco Sanchez de Moya, Juan Garcia Nabia, Rodrigo de Velasco, Pedro de Fonseca