

*A History of The Church in Venezuela, 1810-1930.* By MARY WATERS. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1933. Pp. ix, 260.)

Because of the intimate relationship which existed between Church and State in the Spanish Indies, the history of the Church constituted a large part of the history of the colonial period. With the winning of independence by the Spanish colonies, the Catholic Church, as an institution and a cult, continued to exert a profound influence on the historical evolution of the Hispanic-American nations. Indeed, failure to account for politico-ecclesiastical relations leaves a large gap in the historical accounts of those states. The present study of the Church in Venezuela, a distinct contribution to the history of Venezuela, should serve to emphasize the need and value of similar works for the other countries. Until the all-important Church problem is thoroughly probed it cannot be said that our Hispanic American historians have satisfactorily treated of their subject.

With respect to the religious question, Venezuela occupies a unique position. It is distinguished from the other Hispanic-American countries by the early and complete collapse of clerical influence. Even in the colonial period, the Church was much weaker and less influential than in the other colonies. There developed in the late eighteenth century a spirit of tolerance and religious indifference owing in part, undoubtedly, to the exposed position of Venezuela to foreign influences.

Since the Church was not a definite issue in the revolution, the struggle for independence left little or no bitterness toward that institution. Yet, in the civil discord which followed, the Church became the object of anti-clerical attack. This culminated in the law of the patronage of 1824, which put the Church under the strict surveillance of the State. This justly famed "civil constitution of the Church" has continued in force unchanged to the present day. Despite numerous political upheavals the *Ley de Patronato* has been as unyielding as the laws of the Medes and the Persians.

After the separation of Venezuela from Great Colombia, the conservative oligarchy (1830-1848) did much to destroy the intellectual influence of the Church with the upper classes. It remained for Guzmán Blanco, by a devastating attack on the Church, to reduce the clergy to ineffectiveness with the masses. He made the Church an object of contempt. Although there have been partial reforms since

Guzmán Blanco, the anti-clerical legislation of the dictator stands with little change. In Venezuela today, there is a pseudo-union of Church and State under the Law of the Patronage, for the anti-clericals regard this as the best means of maintaining surveillance over a Church rendered innocuous.

Dr. Watters has made a distinct contribution to the historical bibliography of Hispanic America. Her handling of a difficult question is critical and unbiased. She appreciates the virtues and the weaknesses of clericals and anti-clericals alike. A case in point is her estimate of Archbishop Méndez, whose true worth was depreciated by nationalistic historians. The care and thoroughness with which the study was prepared is evidenced by a remarkably complete bibliography.

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*Modern Hispanic America.* Edited by A. CURTIS WILGUS with a Foreword by LLOYD HECK MARVIN. Volume I in *Studies in Hispanic American Affairs*. (Washington, D. C., The George Washington University Press, 1933. Pp. ix, 628.)

It is eminently fitting that the national capitol should have a "Center of Inter-American Studies" and the sponsors of this enterprise at The George Washington University are to be commended for their effort in this direction. This volume, the initial in a series, makes available the bulk of the material presented by a group of specialists in the Hispanic American field before a "Seminar Conference on Hispanic American Affairs" held during the summer-session period at The George Washington University in 1932.

Twenty-three lectures are contained in the volume, setting forth the views of sixteen different lecturers on the current scene in Hispanic America. The first four papers are introductory in character. Following a brief survey by Professor Wilgus, in the opening lecture, of various manifestations of interest in things Hispanic American in this country, three able lectures by Professor Mary Wilhelmine Williams provide an historical background in a survey of the colonial period. The remaining papers range the entire modern field, from an analysis of political life, through discussions of the economic picture, religious, literary, diplomatic, and social affairs, to a terminal summary view of modern civilization to the southward.