

interesting. His diary also provides one of the very best descriptions of life in the Mariposa mining region. The feeling of the times is in his writing, and, perhaps best of all, he bothered to record very little hearsay material.

As usual with Huntington Library publications, *Mexican Gold Trail* leaves little to be desired from the point of view of the bookmaker's art. The editing by Dr. Dumke has been executed with scholarly thoroughness; the introduction and notes are adequate but, it is gratifying to observe, not so lengthy as to detract from the main text.

JOHN A. HUSSEY.

Berkeley, California.

*Memoirs of Elisha Oscar Crosby. Reminiscences of California and Guatemala, 1849-1864.* Edited by CHARLES ALBRO BARKER. [Huntington Library Publications.] (Los Angeles: Anderson & Ritchie: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1945. Pp. xxvi, 119. Illustrations. \$2.75.)

Elisha Crosby was a young lawyer who went to California with one of the first groups of gold seekers early in 1849, and decided to remain after receiving a fabulous fee for some minor legal services. His reminiscences are a series of short, lively sketches, dealing with his voyage by way of the Isthmus of Panama, with conditions in the first weeks of the gold rush, and with various episodes in his public career. The author describes the framing of the first state constitution, in which he participated, and the establishment of the state government. There is one essay severely criticizing the treatment accorded to Mexican land titles in California.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of the book is the author's account of his service as minister resident in Guatemala during the United States Civil War. Crosby was friendly with Rafael Carrera and apparently saw little to criticize in his regime, although he mentions several episodes to illustrate the dictator's ruthless treatment of his opponents. Carrera "allowed no oppression" and "was always mindful of the rights of the common people, especially of the Indians." Furthermore, he was friendly to the United States and did what he could to prevent the use of Guatemalan ports by Confederate cruisers. His attitude was different from that of the church and of some of his aristocratic lay supporters who, as Crosby thought, secretly favored the French invasion of Mexico because they feared that the expansionist South might succeed in obtaining its independence.

Crosby failed in one of the chief purposes of his mission, which was to obtain consent for the establishment in Central America of a colony of free Negroes from the United States. This scheme, he said, had been

conceived by Seward, Charles Sumner, Benjamin Wade, Francis P. Blair, and Senator King of New York, and had been approved by President Lincoln. It was thought that many southern planters might voluntarily relinquish or agree to sell their slaves if they could thus be removed from the United States, and that the project might thus avert civil strife. The proposal, however, was rejected by the governments of Guatemala and Honduras, which felt that the newcomers could not be assimilated and that they would constitute a political element dangerous to the ascendancy of the people of Spanish descent.

DANA G. MUNRO.

Princeton University.

*El café. Historia de su cultivo y explotación en Cuba.* By FRANCISCO PÉREZ DE LA RIVA. [Biblioteca de historia, filosofía y sociología, Vol. XVI.] (Habana: Jesús Montero, Editor, 1944. Pp. xiii, 383.)

Tobacco, sugar cane, and coffee are so intertwined in Cuban civilization that even a cursory study of the island's economic history must take them all into consideration. The smoking of the first by Indians met Columbus on his arrival; the admiral himself introduced sugar cane into Española, whence it was carried to Cuba; but coffee did not arrive until near the middle of the eighteenth century, brought from Saint Domingue by a Don José Gelabert, better known as the chief of the Tribunal de Cuentas (which audited accounts for Florida, the Spanish West Indies, and later for Louisiana).

Gelabert paved the way for other planters by developing a *cafetal* near Habana. Financial returns were not encouraging, but enough coffee was thrown on the Cuban market to begin its substitution for the traditional Spanish chocolate. Not, however, until a social upheaval shook the neighboring island to the east did coffee become an important part of Cuban economy.

After 1791 slave uprisings in Saint Domingue sent the surviving whites scurrying for safety, thousands of them going to Cuba where they turned naturally to their former occupations of coffee and sugar production. Soon districts around Habana and Santiago de Cuba were dotted with flourishing *cafetales* the fruits of which found ready markets in Europe and North America, formerly supplied in great part by the French island. The refugees also brought their improved methods of preparing the beverage and so hastened its adoption as the cornerstone of Cuban hospitality.

A greater factor in the social success of coffee was the fact that the plantations on which it was grown became centers of culture and refinement. Whereas the sugar plantations belonged largely to absentee