

present time, but some modification seems to be in store for them in the near future.

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*Cartas y relaciones, con otros documentos relativos a la vida y a las empresas del conquistador.* By HERNÁN CORTÉS. Prólogo y notas de NICOLÁS CORONADO. [Clásicos Emecé, 15.] (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, S. A. [Platt, S. A.], 1946. Pp. 687. Pasteboard. \$10.00 m/arg.)

A review of the famous *Cartas de Cortés* may seem, at this late date, as appropriate as a review of Caesar's *Gallic War*, which, indeed, may have been the author's model. In any case the *Cartas* are in no respect inferior to the book of the great Roman, but for some reason they have not received the recognition which I think is due them. We are justifiably skeptical of a man's account of his own exploits, and yet, a careful reading of the *Cartas* should convince the most critical that Cortés wrote the chronicle of his astonishing achievement with a frankness and an objectivity as rare as they are refreshing.

The remarkable thing about Cortés the author is that he wrote with the enviable mastery of language not uncommon among the men of the Renaissance. In an age when soldiers could be poets, scholars, and artists, Cortés showed himself equal to the best. In his book one finds an accuracy and a grandeur of concept in the description of the country, an excited and vigorous curiosity about all aspects of its culture, an expert eye for things military and political, and an artist's selection of vivid and stimulating detail. The clarity and compactness of his style make his book contrast sharply with that of his more popular contemporary, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, whose charm lies precisely in the opposite qualities. Cortés, indeed, belongs in the same distinguished niche with those other two literary soldiers, Xenophon and Caesar. He affords another of the happy instances in which the source-book of the historian becomes a masterpiece of literature.

The Editorial Emecé of Buenos Aires puts us in their debt by giving us a very readable text of one of the classics of all time.

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*Siglo y medio de cultura nuevoleonesa.* By HÉCTOR GONZÁLEZ. (México: Ediciones Botas [Imp. "Manuel León Sánchez," S. C. L.], 1946. Pp. 384. Cardboard.)

As the title implies, the author has put together the various manifestations of the development of culture in the state of Nuevo León, more