

tion in the national folklore. Most of them, and the list is much longer than most persons would surmise, have used poetry to record their joys and sorrows. A few, as in all countries, have attacked the grand themes of love, death, human destiny, the fatherland, and God. Neither the novelists nor the short story writers, less numerous than either the polemics or the poets, have made a lasting contribution. The absence of regular theater performances has naturally militated against the development of dramatic productions.

While the anthology, which will consist of three volumes with excerpts from forty writers in each, will reveal a very considerable number of writers, many worthwhile works have not been published because of the inability of the authors to find editors. The reviewer would add that, although writers in all countries have suffered from this difficulty, those in a poor country like Haiti are much more numerous than in many other nations.

In brief, M. Bellegarde's preface, which contains a long list of Haitian writers in the various categories, is an excellent résumé in literary criticism. This essay and the first volume fully justify the handsome apology that Professor W. Rex Crawford made for his failure to include M. Bellegarde and other Haitians in the former's *Century of Latin-American Thought* (p. 298).

Among the authors in this first volume are such well-known historians as Beaubrun Ardouin, Thomas Madiou, Guy-Joseph Bonnet, Saint-Rémy, Hannibal Price, Anténor Firmin, Solon Menos, Frédéric Marcelin, and H. Pauléus Sannon. The brief excerpts from the works of these historians, as well as from those of authors not so well known, are devoted in large measure to the revolution against France and to glorification of the nation. In view of the paucity of information about most Haitians, the biographical note which the editor has given at the beginning of each excerpt is invaluable. The selections not only give a clear picture of the style and substance of the writers but also constitute excellent exercises for translations into English.

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*Vida de don Gabriel García Moreno.* By MANUEL GÁLVEZ. (Madrid: Gráficas González, 1945. Pp. 495. Paper.) [Distributed by Editorial Escelicer, S. L.]

Everyone who knows anything about Hispanic America and especially Argentina sooner or later comes across the name of Manuel Gálvez. His fame as a novelist—and a very good one—gets him into most of the handbooks of literature and not a few anthologies. Manuel Gálvez

has done other biographical studies but probably none as complete and as ambitious as this life of the great Ecuadorian statesman. Gálvez confesses that for long years his interest was largely directed to Europe to the almost total exclusion of the other Spanish-speaking countries of this hemisphere. As a sort of repentance for this indifference, the author proposes now to interpret—please note the word—some of the more striking figures of Hispanic America. Aside from the personal motive of a new and lively interest in things Hispanic-American, Gálvez stresses his conviction that the time has come for a greater interchange among the Hispanic Americans and that the unfortunate truth is that each nation in its own little compartment knows precious little about what has happened historically in the rest.

Having perpetrated a small tome on García Moreno, I am somewhat moved to warm sympathy for Manuel Gálvez when he declares in his preface that his work has been stimulated and even irritated by the travesty on a biography that was published some years ago over the signature of Roberto Agramonte, professor of psychology at the University of Habana. This uncritical *mélange*, with its curious assortment of history, anecdote, fable, and out-of-date psychoanalysis, made the figure of the Ecuadorean president something grotesque out of a chamber of horrors. The Cuban professor depicted García Moreno as the victim of almost every known ailment, mental and physical, with a few very special ones thrown in that those of us who know nothing about mental diseases had never even heard of. This book received reasonably wide circulation. Gálvez, indignant at this type of writing, with its pseudo-scientific appeal, has tried to construct a sound, balanced, and sane appraisal of García Moreno.

The prospective reader need have no worry that this is a novelized or romanticized account of García Moreno. It is nothing like the life of Bolívar that Emil Ludwig produced. Although the pages are not reduced to near nothingness by the extent of the footnotes—in fact there are none at all—the book is carefully documented and based on a close study of sources. Although Author Gálvez was never in Ecuador, he has managed to catch the atmosphere and smell of the place extraordinarily well. His judgments are moderate and realistic. He does not fall into that easy transposition of times and persons that so characterizes our day, when men like García Moreno are depicted as “fascists” and their regimes a sort of forerunner of the March on Rome.

García Moreno is admittedly a difficult and contradictory figure. He fails to appear, for some strange reason, among the personalities that loom large in the textbooks on Latin America. Not a few of our historians give us the impression that he was a medieval-minded (as

though that defined itself), obscurantist, pietistic fraud who foisted a cruel government on an unsuspecting people, eager and panting for democracy, modern style. This insufferable over-simplification merely confuses the figure and the period in which he moved. I am delighted to find that Manuel Gálvez has cut straight through this rot and cant and that he shows García Moreno as an admirable administrator, a builder of genius, a man of vast and varied tastes and interests, a scholar and gentleman who combined no small worldly wisdom with great piety and personal practices of religion. He was a good Catholic and one who worked at it. He refused to believe that attending Mass and advancing the material and spiritual interests of his country were necessarily contradictory activities.

Without our wishing to assume a polemical position in the least, the reading of the Gálvez biography opens up some intensely interesting speculation. It causes us to wonder first of all why the so-called "liberals," Benito Juárez type, are invariably proclaimed as great liberators, democrats, and constructive statesmen, while García Moreno is relegated to the dark corners of the history books as a kind of survival from another age, a statesman who ought to have flourished in the eleventh, not the nineteenth century.

It is piously to be hoped that this excellent biography, which is eminently readable, will dissipate some of the confusion surrounding García Moreno and his efforts to ennoble Ecuador and start it on its way to greatness. The injury done his work and memory by Juan Montalvo will take a long time to disappear. The liberal writer, with his vitriolic pen, laid it on so thick against García Moreno and all his doings that it takes a tremendous amount of labor to get below this mass of misinformation, prejudice, and plain calumny to the hard realities of García Moreno and his time. A poverty-stricken, undeveloped, and largely illiterate nation, harrassed by Peru and threatened from Europe, was no laboratory for experiments in universal suffrage or the democratic process. García Moreno had the curious idea that Ecuador must be kept alive first of all and preserved from extinction before the full play of political doctrines could come into being. He was quite right. But only a few have been willing to see it. Manuel Gálvez sees the whole thing clearly and honestly. He comes to the only conclusion that is possible for an honest investigator—that Gabriel García Moreno was a very great man indeed.

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