

for it reveals that she, although the mother of six children, was never married. Three of her offspring, including Juana, were fathered, according to her, by Pedro de Asbage y Vargas (on whom this volume throws no new light); the other three, including her only son, were the children of Diego Ruiz Lozano, a married *labrador* who lived in the vicinity of the Ramírez home near Amecameca in the province of Chalco. The seeming contradiction between this statement and Juana's declaration, both in her will and in her act of profession, that she was "hija legítima" may be explained, according to the editor, by her father's having acknowledged the children in some form—a proceeding, under Spanish law, that would have justified her claim. It must not be overlooked, however, that in the deed of the slave to Juana her mother terms herself "viuda" of Pedro de Asbage "mi esposo" and declares Juana as "hija legítima"—contradictions which remain to be satisfactorily explained.

Various details of the relations between the brother and sisters and their children emerge from these documents. It appears that all six were devoted to each other, and Ruiz Lozano to his children, to whom both he and his wife left their property. One of them, Inés, married José Miguel de Torres, secretary of the University of Mexico, as Dorothy Schons pointed out. The children of Josefa María de Asbage were taken into the family of Francisco de Villena, a Mexico City notary, who educated them, gave them his name, and made them his heirs. José Antonio de Alzate, the eighteenth-century scientist, was also a distant relative of the poetess.

These documents merit the careful study of any serious student of the life of Latin America's greatest woman poet. Their editor is to be congratulated on their discovery and publication.

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El pensamiento económico en México. By JESÚS SILVA HERZOG. [Colección Tierra Firme, 29.] (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1947. Pp. 199. Paper.)

In the light of the many stimulating things which Jesús Silva Herzog has written, this book is a disappointment. The principal reason for writing it seems to be national pride—to show Mexicans, and others as well, that Mexico has had thinkers who have dealt with economic questions in a serious, sophisticated, and meaningful manner. In no branch of knowledge, Silva Herzog believes, has Mexico received adequate credit for what its sons have done. Indeed, Mexicans themselves have failed to recognize the merit of what their own intellectuals have achieved. For the field of economic thought, therefore, Silva Herzog

sets out to correct what he considers to be an uninformed and unjust evaluation of Mexico's contribution.

It should be pointed out at once that Silva Herzog is not pretentious about what *he* has done in writing this book. He says that he has only traced the history of economic thought in Mexico (since independence) in broad outline, and he leaves it to others to fill out and embellish the structure by further research. What does strike me as pretentious, however, is the implication (plus an occasional explicit remark) that the Mexican authors about whom he writes were making original contributions to the development of economic doctrine. That many of them were thinkers of stature, that they were well-read scholars and writers of excellent prose, are propositions not to be doubted. Nor is it to be doubted that they concerned themselves with questions of broad importance as well as with the economic issues peculiar to Mexico itself. But the fact remains that their "working ideas" about economics were derived from currents of thought in Europe, and especially in England. Political economy in the nineteenth century was mainly an English science.

This does not mean that it is fruitless to write about Mexican economic thought. It does suggest, however, that he who does so has the obligation of stressing (far more than Jesús Silva Herzog does) the dependence of the Mexican writers upon the general ideas that were developed elsewhere. Indeed, had he given appropriate emphasis to such ideas, he probably would have organized the book differently. As it is, he follows a chronological approach, taking up each writer as an individual case. Little attempt is made to relate them one to another, although there are obvious similarities in basic points of view. Even without tying them to European economic thought, it would have been useful to group the Mexican authors into "schools" on the basis of similar underlying ideas.

About forty different authors are treated in this work. Included among them are some who were only concerned with economic questions in a marginal sense, some who were involved in government administration relating to economic (usually fiscal) affairs but who had little to say about general ideas on economics, and some who wrote pretty much on a textbook level. All the writers falling into these three categories could have been handled briefly, or with passing mention. Actually, some of them are treated quite fully. Thus the book cannot fail to give the reader an impression analogous to what he would get from reading a volume on economic thought in the United States, in which much of the space would be devoted to philosophers who made collateral observations on economics, to the economic ideas expounded

by various secretaries of the Treasury, and to writers of textbooks in elementary economics.

Jesús Silva Herzog introduces numerous critical comments about the authors with whom he deals. These observations are always interesting and stimulating. However, they are mostly of the nature of spot judgments, in which Silva Herzog expresses agreement or disagreement with a specific point, rather than evaluations of a writer's system of ideas as a whole. As a result, his critiques take on a haphazard, casual quality which diminishes their effectiveness. In this respect, as in others in this volume, Jesús Silva Herzog does not do himself justice.

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La vagancia en Cuba. By JOSÉ ANTONIO SACO. [Publicaciones del Ministerio de Educación, Cuadernos de Cultura, Séptima serie, Número 3.] (Habana: Talleres Tipográficos Editorial Lex, 1946. Pp. 119. Photograph. Paper.)

In a competition sponsored in 1831 by the Cuban Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, José Antonio Saco wrote a brilliant essay on the factors that contributed to vagrancy among the youth of his country. His treatment of the subject is revealed in the headings of the sections of his study: gambling, daily lotteries in cafés and other public places, billiards, multiplicity of holidays, poor roads, lack of homes for the poor, lack of asylums for destitute children, and lack of discipline in prisons. He considered as another possibility the excessive number of lawyers, a fact that sent many of them into questionable practices in making a living. The small number of lucrative professions and occupations, the imperfect state of popular education, disdain on the part of whites for manual arts, the fertility of the soil which made existence too easy, and the climate were other disadvantages to be overcome. Saco was careful to distinguish between *vagos meramente tales* and the *vagos viciosos*. So up-to-date seems his treatment that Sr. Rafael Estenger comments in the introduction to the present edition: "Pero resulta curioso advertir que las causas de la vagancia a que refiere Saco, con rectificaciones de orden cuantitativo, siguen aún en indudable vigencia. Y han persistido a través de las distintas etapas de nuestra historia."

As the recitation of the shortcomings of a people has cost more than one prophet his life, so the publication of Saco's *Memoria sobre la vagancia en Cuba* helped to send its author into almost lifelong exile. But for this very reason the essay assumes importance out of all proportion to its length.