

*Guerra de la independencia: Ensayo histórico-político de una epopeya española.* By JOSÉ MARÍA GARCÍA-RODRÍGUEZ. (Barcelona: Luis de Ceralt, Editor, 1945. 2 vols. Pp. 370, 420. Illustrations.)

There is probably no event in the eventful history of Spain in which the Spaniards take a greater interest and show a more patriotic pride than in their heroic resistance to the Napoleonic invasion. José María García-Rodríguez has demonstrated his familiarity with the vast historical material on this subject, and has assembled it and presented it with the skill of an artist. His is no "dry-as-dust" record, but a story told with sympathy, understanding, and with a narrative style which revives the colorful drama of the Spanish war for independence. He seems at times to have broken from the cold objectivity of the historical scholar, but at the same time he has been able to capture the personal feelings and turbulent emotions which truly picture the riotous events of the revolution.

The first volume covers the events and conditions of Spain and the Spanish court before the invasion. The author is critical of the crown, finding Charles III puritanical, Charles IV, unenlightened, and the voluptuous María Luisa, uninspiring, unfaithful, and fearsome. The central figure in this decadent court is naturally Don Manuel Godoy (*Godoy-soy-yo*), "Prince of the Peace," Duke of Alcudia, political paramour of the queen, husband of the king's cousin, devoted lover of Doña Tuda. ¡*Qué hombre!* Except for the wide ramifications concerning the lives and opinions of nearly all the prominent persons of the Spanish court and government, one might consider Volume I as the story of the "rise and fall" of Godoy, who, when exiled, had only three persons interested in his welfare; the king, foolishly, the queen, lovingly, and Godoy himself, selfishly.

Chapter V has the distinction of being the account of a contemporary, Don Juan Escoiquiz, whose narrative of his interview with the emperor is told without any "interruption" from the author. Marvelous restraint! All the chapters are well interspersed with quotations, many of them by contemporaries. These are generally followed by comments, frequently curt and occasionally satirical, yet apparently appropriate.

Volume II tells of the spontaneous and fervid resistance of provincial Spain, of the double-dealing and selfish actions of opportunistic politicians, of the futile, Machiavellian maneuvers of Napoleon, and of the vacillating antics of the "nominal" King Joseph, *el rey intruso*. The story is fundamentally a story of the Spanish resistance, but it includes one chapter on Napoleon and England.

The patriotic tone runs throughout the whole work, and can be inferred from such titles as: "Heroes in Barcelona," "Immortal Gerona,"

and "Individual Spanish Heroes." The patriotic partisanship of the author is more than counterbalanced by his remarkable ability to portray the temperament of the people, by his keen analysis of men, motives, and events, and by his literary skill. He draws a sharp distinction between the incompetence and intrigue of a corrupt court, and the spontaneous sacrifices made by the simple, patriotic people of Spain.

The work is exceptionally well supported by footnotes which contain full bibliographical references and a considerable amount of historical data, frequently quoted directly. The literary interest of the author is indicated by his addition of a long appendix of poetry (182 pp.). This is preceded by an introductory essay in which he evaluates the poetry; and he frequently finds in the poorer poetry, often anonymous, greater sincerity and honesty than in the superior and signed poetry.

There is no artist who has illustrated the Spanish resistance to Napoleon with as much "strength, skill, and effrontery" as the incomparable Goya, that "violent agent of the revolution." This study contains copies of fourteen of his paintings in Volume I, mostly prominent personalities. Volume II contains copies of eighteen of his superb etchings of violence and executions, each with its cryptic caption. Seldom has an author been more fortunate in selecting an illustrator. The author and the artist complement one another; the theme is skillfully developed by the author, the tone is set by the artist.

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