

to the horse: how ranch horses are named; the evolution of the Western saddle; Western brands; Indian horsemanship; the development of the modern rodeo; epic rides, Eastern horses, and the American quarter running horse. A bibliographical sketch of materials available for the study of various epochs and phases of horse history is also included, and it presents a basic list and comments which are useful for a specialized study of any particular period or area.

*The Horse of the Americas* is a combination of chapters and episodes, scholarly evaluations on the one hand, and "yarns" or horse lore on the other. The latter certainly have played an important role in various parts of both American continents, such as the Western plains of the United States and the Argentine pampas, and are as much a part of the story of the horse as the development of saddles. The result of this mixture is a book in which both scholars and horse-lovers can find interest and profit. As a scholarly effort, however, it must be admitted that the book suffers somewhat from disjointedness and incomplete integration. Much of the material presented in the appendices, for example, might be more suitably included in the text. The section on naming the horse probably could have been a part of the chapter on breeds, strains, types, and colors without a serious cleavage in subject matter. Indian horsebreaking presumably could have been included in the sections on the Zuñi and Apache. And the unit on the American quarter running horse apparently could have been added to that part of the text entitled "Colonial Aristocrats, the 'Quarter Horse.'"

Despite these minor matters of organization, which do not lessen the value of the information presented, the book is very readable and entertaining. Mr. Denhardt's knowledge of horses and horse history is well known. *The Horse of the Americas* is a contribution to an understanding of Spanish-American civilization as well as an interesting sketch of the career of the Spanish horse in the New World.

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*Diálogo sobre la historia de la pintura en México.* By JOSÉ BERNARDO COUTO. Edición prólogo y notas de MANUEL TOUSSAINT. (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1947. Pp. 162. Illustrations. Boards.)

Nothing could be more welcome to the student of the art of Latin America than this new edition of the first history of colonial painting in Mexico. Originally compiled in the 1860's, Couto's *Diálogo*, as Manuel Toussaint proves in his introduction to this volume, is an amazingly accurate appraisal of the development of the school. No sub-

sequent study has in fact entirely superseded the work of this poet, legal theorist, and diplomat who devoted the last years of his life to the task of setting down what he knew and felt about his country's early painters. The book is engagingly written in a crisp, informal style which purports to reproduce a lengthy conversation between the Catalan painter Pelegrín Clavé, the writer, and his cousin, J. J. Pesado. The occasion for the dialogue is a visit to the exhibition of paintings expropriated from the religious orders which Clavé, as director of the Academia de San Carlos of Mexico City, had organized in its galleries and which is now the national collection of painting.

Some of Couto's judgments now seem strange, but we know that they represented the esthetic views of the period. For example, he gave far more importance to the facile and shallow Miguel Cabrera than a critic today would be inclined to do. Couto saw no good in pre-Columbian painting:

Sé que esas pinturas, de grande interés para la arqueología y la historia, no lo son igualmente para el arte, que es lo que en esta casa se profesa. En ellas no hay que buscar dibujo correcto, ni ciencia del claro-oscuro y la perspectiva, ni sabor de belleza y de gracia. Parece que a sus autores llamó poco la atención la figura humana que a nuestros ojos es el prototipo de lo bello; así es que no la estudiaron, ni conocieron bien sus proporciones y actitudes, ni acertaron a expresar, por los medios que ella misma ofrece, las cualidades morales y los afectos del ánimo. Además, se nota en sus autores cierta propensión a observar y copiar de preferencia los objetos menos gentiles que presenta la naturaleza, como animales de ingrata vista.

One wonders whether Couto, who apparently based his criticism on Aztec codices alone, would have felt the same way had he known the illustrated Maya manuscripts of European collections.

For this new edition Manuel Toussaint, who has made long and fruitful researches on the subject of Mexican colonial painting, which should soon be presented in a volume of his own, has supplied invaluable notes that correct errors Couto made, amplify some of his statements, and identify pictures which he mentioned. The critic's biography is provided, as well as sixteen good reproductions of paintings referred to in the text.

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*Documentos históricos de Nuevo León anotados y comentados: 1596-1811.*

Edited by CARLOS PÉREZ-MALDONADO. (Monterrey, N. L.: Impresora Monterrey, 1947. Pp. 220. Paper.) [Distributed by the author, Apartado Postal 389, Monterrey.]

The editor of this collection of documents on the history of Monterrey and the state of Nuevo León has previously given us the elegantly