

And indeed, the making of such a building, over four centuries of history, is a matter to meditate. It has some of the cumulative effect of man's effort that we find in a legal system, or the economic structure that supplies a nation's needs. It is not only that a series of styles can be isolated, like so many geological deposits, fascinating as this is to the cataloguer of style development. It is not only the evidence of the efforts and additions of succeeding generations that holds us, although the whole complex is undoubtedly a great historical document. In the end, something has been made: in the end we have the building, which, like some great living creature, is more than an end-product of evolution. It is a thing in itself, a splendid reality, a unique statement.

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NATIONAL PERIOD

Relaciones diplomáticas hispano-mexicanas (1839-1898). Serie I: Despachos generales, I (1839-1841). (México: El Colegio de México, 1949. Pp. xxxii, 379. Paper. Indices.)

The historical value of the archives of the Spanish Embassy has long been known, especially since Genaro Estrada used them for his study of General Prim. El Colegio de México is therefore adding another to its already imposing list of significant contributions to the revival of historical studies in Mexico with this initial volume of carefully selected and edited correspondence from the Embassy archives covering the period of the first Spanish minister to Mexico, Don Angel Calderón de la Barca, and the first few months of the period of his successor, Don Pedro Pascual de Oliver. In the introduction the editors announce that the collection will cover the years 1839 to 1898, and will embrace two series, *Despachos generales*, of which this is the first volume, and *Despachos especiales*, special collections on such topics as the Cuban War, and various treaties and conventions. If the work is continued in the ample scope of the present volume the collection may well rival in size the *Archivo histórico diplomático mexicano*, which already numbers some fifty volumes.

Selection and annotation of the documents are the work of a trio of competent historical scholars, Javier Malagón y Barceló, Enriqueta Lópezlira de Díaz Thomé and J. M. Miquel i Vergés, with the active collaboration of the Spanish Ambassador to Mexico, Dr. Luis Nicolau d'Olwer, who has contributed a critical prologue. Apparently documents have been printed without deletions or omissions, and in general the editors are to be highly commended for the selection of documents

of historical value in a broad sense. The general plan has been to select a basic document, usually a despatch, and to annex to it significant relative papers. Three indexes, of documents, of persons, and of places, add to the usefulness of the work.

Spain recognized the independence of Mexico in 1836, but not until 1839 was Calderón de la Barca sent as minister. Since his was the first official mission from Spain to one of her former colonies the instructions which he carried (pp. 6-12) and his first despatches relating impressions of conditions and affairs in Mexico have special interest and importance. Since approximately four-fifths of the volume are devoted to the two years of his mission, his gifted but patently prejudiced pen sets the tone of the volume. For he looked at Mexico with the eyes of a representative of a class and a society which were fast passing, in Europe as in America. Although he came with the determination to keep an open mind, he could not help feeling that independence had been a mistake, that Mexico was becoming a "military anarchy," and could only be saved by European intervention to establish a monarchy.

Because Mexico was the only Spanish American nation having regular diplomatic relations with Spain the records of these years have fundamental value for the history of all of Spanish America. In this connection the despatches of Calderón de la Barca make it clear that the governments of Spain and France, at least, were, from the beginning, supported by Mexican despatches in the view that sooner or later the instability of Mexico would require intervention. His despatch of August 15, 1840 (pp. 132-136), commenting on the revolution of 1840, is especially noteworthy. He reports that "thoughtful Mexicans" tell him that only European intervention to put a European prince on the throne will save Mexico. At the same time he is skeptical of the enthusiasm of the French minister who is urging the diplomatic corps to join in recommending such action, feeling that the latter is attempting to provoke situations to justify intervention to establish a French prince (*"que lo que el querría aquí sería un príncipe francés y que por ver si es posible hacerlo venir busca disputas y se expresa en términos tan denigrantes con respecto a los mexicanos."*).

Calderón de la Barca no doubt reflected accurately the views of disillusioned Mexican leaders and of the class-conscious Mexican society in which he moved. But it is startling, to say the least, to find him reporting that the Mexican minister of foreign relations considers the political situation (1840) hopeless (*"Da por inútil todo. No cree que tenga remedio la inanición de este enorme gigante exangüe casi y carcomido . . ."*). (Despatch Aug. 15, 1840, p. 134). He found that disorder reigned, finances were in a state of chronic crisis, culture and

institutions were decaying, and "all society was in complete disaccord with the enforced order of things" ("*La sociedad entera está en completa disonancia con el forzado orden de cosas.*") (Despatch, Jan. 22, 1840, p. 26). But if his monarchist and undemocratic views kept him from seeing the vitality of the new social forces that were emerging, especially among the mestizos, he was no more blind than the Mexicans with whom he associated.

Students of the relations of the United States and Mexico will be interested in the Spanish minister's view that Joel R. Poinsett was responsible not only for *yorkino* agitation for a federal republic, and hence for the republican form of government in Mexico, but for the very independence of Mexico. (Despatch, Jan. 22, 1840, p. 26.) The editor's footnote (n. 38, p. 325), ample in other respects, is at fault in not commenting on the obvious discrepancy between this charge and the fact that Poinsett was at the time a member of the United States Congress, where he was taking an active part in urging recognition of the independence of the Latin American nations. The charge in the same despatch that the federalism of Mejía in 1839 was "fomented by the Texans" is also interesting, although Calderón de la Barca offers no proof of his contention. (p. 27.)

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Latin American Leaders. By HAROLD E. DAVIS. (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1949. Pp. 170. Cloth.)

"Auch kleine Dingen" have their function, and a slender volume like Mr. Davis' may have a particularly important one if it encourages our intelligentsia to become acquainted with the representative men of the numerous republics to the South-east. To be sure, in an average space of eight pages one cannot expect the full-length portrait, but what one has a right to expect Mr. Davis gives his reader, for he is well-balanced, clear, judicious, and unobtrusively well-informed, and conveys a maximum of truth in a minimum of words.

The author is too wise to expect Latin America to be satisfied with his heroes of sword and pen. If the list were ten times as long, the proponents of certain names and certain countries would still raise a shocked outcry at the omission of their favorite great men. He makes an effort, not entirely successful, to avoid the difficulty by labeling his men representative or typical and also by referring to many who do not receive extended treatment.

Most students of Latin America will agree that in considering that area it is especially fitting to seek a key to understanding in great men