

rather than merely in impersonal trends and institutions, and that men of ideas "have exercised more influence . . . on the movements of politics than have their counterparts in the United States." It shows more than a little comprehension of Latin-American mentality that Mr. Davis has included among his sixteen leaders a poet, Rubén Darío. One can be thankful, also, for his remembering Haiti in the person of Toussaint L'Ouverture, and giving Brazil its due, in essays on Feijó and Euclides da Cunha.

The thumb-nail sketches of these outstanding figures of the last 150 years fall into two groups: those devoted to nine "political leaders," and seven studies of "leaders of thought." The division is useful if one remembers that political leaders in Latin America are likely to be pretty literate characters and that thinkers usually aspire to political influence.

We wish *Latin American Leaders* more readers than hard-boiled realism would justify one in expecting, and hope that Mr. Davis' "*Nociones de Biografía*" will send his readers to the many volumes of *Pensamiento Vivo* and *Pensadores de América* that have burgeoned in recent years, and lead them to discover scores of fascinating figures in addition to the handful here taken to be representative.

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*Guayaquil en 1842: Rocafuerte y la epidemia de fiebre amarilla.* By PEDRO JOSÉ HUERTA. (Guayaquil: Talleres del Colegio Nacional Rocafuerte, 1947. Pp. 250. Paper.)

This author has refined the high grade ore which he mined from local archival veins into a dramatically written account of the fearful yellow fever epidemic which, from September, 1842 to August, 1843, devastated Guayaquil. That port city with a population of about 20,000 dominated the Province of Guayas, which suffered a ten per cent loss or almost 5,000 lives.

The heroes of this piece are Vicente Rocafuerte, second president of the Republic of Ecuador (1835-1839) but, in 1842, Governor of the Province of Guayas; also that handful of civil servants, shopkeepers, physicians, and clergy who chose to remain behind and assist those unable to flee from the "formidable enemy." Singled out as the villain is Dr. Juan Francisco Arcia, the Chief Public Health Officer. He failed to execute the duties of his office when, on August 31, the schooner *Reina Victoria* put into port with at least one yellow-fever victim aboard. From that point of origin, the disease fanned out, insidiously but rapidly. Terror replaced gaiety in the coffeehouses where dominoes was the game of the day, at the bullfights, at the performances of Professor Antonio

Neuman's lyric opera company recently arrived from Lima, in the homes of rich and poor, of the governing and the governed.

From this point on, the author chronicles the course of the epidemic. To allay public fear at the outset, a Board of Physicians recommended that the local government proclaim the prevailing sickness as not yellow fever but as a "bilious fever of a seasonal nature!" Individual doctors, however, did yeoman work and treated for yellow fever. The energetic Rocafuerte initiated practical measures. To pleas for assistance, the central government at Quito and neighboring communities responded generously. The listing of individual contributions might have been dispensed with. The "Black Month" of November, with biographical data on distinguished victims, is vividly described. Impact of the epidemic upon the daily life of the "sorrowful and desolate city" receives a similar treatment.

There is a chapter on contemporary local opinion, especially that of Dr. José Mascote in his *Memoria sobre la fiebre amarilla*, concerning the origins and pathology of yellow fever. According to those views, the disease could not be contagious because it was not produced by a virus, and for the same reason could not be carried from one place to another.

The summing up with statistics is admittedly not what it might be because of the lack of accurate data. While the absence of an index is not surprising, that of a simple table of contents is.

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*Latin American Politics and Government.* By AUSTIN F. MACDONALD. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1949. Pp. ix, 642. Maps. Illustrations.)

Professor Macdonald attempts to describe both the theory and the practice of government in each of the twenty Latin-American republics. Taking up each country separately, he describes its people and its geography and sketches very briefly its history since independence. He discusses recent political events in much more detail, and then summarizes the more important provisions of the current constitution. He always keeps before the reader the fact that the constitution, from the Latin American point of view, is "a record of what should be done under ideal conditions" rather than "the fundamental law, to be regarded as superior to all other laws and enforceable under all circumstances."

A description of the provisions of twenty rather similar constitutions involves much repetition and does not make very exciting reading. On the other hand the account of contemporary politics is lively, if some-