

the Jesuit mission society. The author's description of the socio-economic structure of the society in each of the *Sete povos* and his analysis of the contribution of the mission Indians to the economy and to the ethnic formation of colonial Rio Grande do Sul have yet to be surpassed. Fifteen years after its first appearance Aurélio Porto's history is still the finest study available on the conflict between spiritual and material values and the clash of empires in the Rio Grande-La Plata region.

Volume V, which is planned for publication in 1958, will complement the two preceding volumes. Titled *Cultura dos sete povos*, the study is expected to follow a broad outline prepared by Aurélio Porto shortly before his death in 1945, and will deal primarily with art in Jesuit mission civilization. Father Arnaldo Bruxel, S.J., who has been gathering manuscript materials in several European archives, will complete the volume.

Scholars working in the field of colonial and religious history will be pleased to learn that the series, *Jesuítas no sul do Brasil*, is expected to continue indefinitely, with a new volume appearing approximately every two years.

Washington, D. C.

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*La obra de Alexander von Humboldt en México. Fundamento de la geografía moderna.* By RAYFRED LIONEL STEVENS-MIDDLETON. Mexico City, 1956. Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia. Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística, No. 202. Maps. Bibliography. Pp. xxi, 269. Paper.

Alexander von Humboldt towers like a Chimborazo above the lesser heights of early nineteenth-century scholarship. His four short years in the equinoctial regions of the New World have provided students of Latin American geography and history with a datum plane of incomparable richness and reliability, for Humboldt was perhaps the first scientifically trained man to travel widely who had a curiosity about all that he saw and heard and a desire to know the "why" of everything. While his not inconsiderable contributions to botany, geology, geodesy and climatology have become largely outdated with the passage of time his regional monographs on New Spain and Cuba and the shorter descriptive passages in his *Personal Narrative* and *Aspects of Nature* remain almost as valid and readable today as when they were written 150 years ago.

In a doctoral dissertation in geography written at the Universidad Nacional de México the North American Rayfred L. Stevens has

meticulously and critically surveyed the works of Humboldt that relate to his 11-month sojourn in Mexico. The analysis is based in part on a step-by-step retracing of the routes traveled by the great man, from Acapulco to Mexico City, thence to the mines of Guanajuato and Pachuca and to the then new, Paricutín-like Volcán de Jorullo in Michoacán, and finally to Puebla, Jalapa and Vera Cruz, comparing the present scene with that described by Humboldt. The result is a balanced and perceptive, if at times tedious, critique of Humboldt's contribution to our understanding of the Mexican land and people, especially as this is represented in the *Ensayo político sobre el reino de la Nueva España*. Stevens considers Humboldt's work under the conventional systematic subdivisions of geography, including cartography, geology (land forms), climatology, biogeography and human geography, with considerable emphasis on the last. A concluding chapter treats of the German scientist's important influence on the development of later geographic thought and of geography as a separate field of study. The *Ensayo político* is seen as the prototype of the regional monographs of modern geographers, especially those that employ the comparative and historical method in the interpretation of the cultural landscape.

This is an interesting and useful work. It should be noted, however, that the bibliography of Humboldt's writings and Humboldt biographies that is found at the end is quite incomplete, being especially deficient in German titles and in English-language translations.

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*Vida del Mariscal Jorge Robledo*. By EMILIO ROBLEDÓ. Prologue by ENRIQUE OTERO D'OSTA. Bogotá, 1955. Ministerio de Educación Nacional. Biblioteca de Autores Colombianos, 100. Illustrations. Index. Pp. xxiii, 508. Paper.

Marshal Jorge Robledo emerges in this sympathetic biography as a most uncommon conquistador. Arriving in the Indies in 1528 in the expedition of Pedro de Alvarado, he subsequently served under Sebastián de Belalcázar in the conquest of Quito and in the founding of Cali and Popayán. In 1539 he undertook the pacification of the valley of the Cauca River below Cali, founding Anserma (1539), Cartago (1540), and Antioquia (1541).

Basing his study on contemporary chronicles and on hitherto unpublished documents, the author presents Robledo as tolerant and patient, solicitous for the welfare of the Indians, and unusually adept