

of Latin American history—the Church—is coming around to offer a moral assist to the urban middle classes. All of the factors combine to support a political theory of recent history, which needs no political parties. Socio-economic change is enough. In spite of these generalizations, however, which spread over Johnson's interpretation of a continent, he makes it very clear that the historical process and specific steps of change vary from one country to another. The military-elite versus the middle class theme is similar but not the same.

If these reservations are from the point of view of an overall doctrine for history, the book has, on the other hand, a valuable and stimulating point of departure for current affairs. This is undoubtedly a major intention of the author, and here he succeeds very well, if we hold back a bit on his further advance from retrospect to prospect. This is always tricky for historians and social scientists. The solid value is chiefly in understanding the present and the contemporary. Not only does he provoke interest by the manner of thinking about things in Latin America, but he points the way to either more knowledge to answer the writer, strong argument to refute him, or still wider acceptance of the point of view. At all events the writing and teaching of modern Latin American history gains immeasurably from Johnson's book.

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*Rails, Mines and Progress: Seven American Promoters in Mexico. 1867-1911.* By DAVID M. PLETCHER. Ithaca, New York, 1958. Cornell University Press. Maps. Notes. Index. pp. x, 321.

Professor Pletcher in this study, which deservedly received the recognition of the Beveridge Prize, examines the activities of seven American promoters in Mexico during the period 1867-1911. He modestly states that his work is not intended to be a comprehensive history of American economic activities in Mexico, but his book does represent an introduction to that field through the conclusions drawn from the careers of the selected cases.

In a series of well-written and interesting chapters he studies the writings and careers of William S. Rosecrans, Edward Lee Plumb, Albert Kimsey Owen, U. S. Grant, Alexander R. Shepherd, William C. Green, and Arthur E. Stillwell. The selection of these personalities, chosen from the two fields of promotion-railroads and mining—which represented 85% of American capital invested in Mexico, is justified by the author in terms of the availability of source materials

and of the objective of showing the widest possible variety of backgrounds and methods of action.

These case studies demonstrate the gap between aims and achievements and, in this sense, perhaps were typical of the experiences of the majority of American promoters. However, it is to be regretted that some of the more successful promoters like Edward L. Doheny and Daniel Guggenheim who contributed more to the economic development of Mexico are relegated to a few brief paragraphs in the concluding chapter. It is significant that in the list of the thirteen most profitable American companies operating in Mexico between 1900 and 1910 only two resulted from the efforts of the colorful gentlemen discussed in this volume.

As common denominators of his seven case studies, Professor Pletcher emphasizes the overly enthusiastic evaluation of Mexico's potential, the underestimation of the natural, economic and political obstacles, and an ideology of peaceful economic imperialism. He attributes to the promoters significant responsibility for American's false sense of security and for the illusion of easy riches as well as their unpreparedness for the violent eruption of social discontent in the years after 1910.

Location of places and projected routes is facilitated by six line drawing maps. The utility of the volume for the specialist is enhanced by extensive and careful documentation. However, consultation of references is made somewhat awkward by the omission of a bibliography.

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*Rondon conta sua vida.* By ESTHER DE VIVEIROS. Rio de Janeiro, 1958. Livraria São José. Introduction by RACHEL DE QUEIRÓS. Illustrations. Pp. 638. Paper.

It was Theodore Roosevelt who in 1914 took the measure of the future Army Marshal of Brazil, Candido Mariano da Silva Rondon, during an exploratory expedition down the uncharted headwaters of the Rio de Duvida, since named the Rio Roosevelt. He found his companion a "gentleman," a "competent and audacious explorer," and "superb naturalist, scientist, scholar and philosopher."

This man, Rondon, was the almost legendary "soldier who would not kill." When in 1891, army contingents under his command first undertook exploration and telegraph construction through jungle inhabited by hostile Indians, Rondon established the motto "Die if necessary, never kill." And through the years this rigid code has