

seaboard seems to command disproportionate coverage. Some of the less glamorous states remain virtually unviewed by the "eyes," such as Nevada, Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado, Utah, and Washington.

It seems that the "eyes of discovery" were myopic and astigmatic.
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The Broken Spears. The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico.
 Edited and introduction by MIGUEL LEÓN-PORTILLA. Boston, 1962.
 Beacon Press. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 168.
 \$5.00.

This is a fascinating book. Never before has a connected account of the coming of the Spaniards to Mexico and the conquest of Tenochtitlán been put together from native accounts. Though some of the native writers have apparently been partially won over to the Spanish point of view, in the main this is an account of events by the "other side." The native chroniclers, after their initial amazement and dismay at seeing horses, metal armor, steel swords, and artillery, were not greatly impressed by the qualities of their conquerors. The greed of the Spaniards who scrambled for gold "like pigs" disgusted them.

In his introduction Miguel León-Portilla does a masterful job of summarizing the Aztec Empire, way of life of the people, and the situation surrounding the conquest. He is a bit carried away by his enthusiasm for things Aztec when he bounds the Aztec Empire. When he says that it stretched "from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf Coast," he is only technically correct, and perhaps not even that. Four times the Aztecs attempted to conquer the Tarascans of western Mexico and four times they were beaten decisively. Only small Nahuatl enclaves existed on or near the Pacific Coast and there is room for grave doubt that they were attached to the confederacy of the Culhua Mexia. This is not a serious error.

The "Omens Foretelling the Coming of the Spaniards" as described by Sahagún's informants and by Muñoz Camargo are quite provocative. One is inclined to speculate as to how much consists in exaggeration of natural phenomena after the fact of the conquest, how much was based upon Aztec mythological lore and how much was pure fabrication on someone's part. Some of them might be explained quite naturally; others we cannot be expected to believe at all. There is evidence that the Aztec people believed them, though, and that they had a very definite depressing effect on Motecuhzoma, now better known as Moctezuma.

The native accounts contained in this book do not disagree in general with the history of the Conquest as related by modern his-

torians. This is partly due to the fact that modern historians have taken the native chronicles into account. It is only in small matters of interpreting of events and of emotional reaction that we find any variance.

The English translation by Lysander Kemp is felicitous; the illustrations by Alberto Beltrán, adapted from drawings in the codices, fit singularly well with the spirit of the book. Three elegies on the fall of Tenochtitlán are included and, on finishing the book, we can respond empathically with the scribe who wrote: "Broken spears lie in the roads; we have torn our hair in grief. The houses are roofless now, and their walls are red with blood." The Aztec glory was gone.

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Vida y viajes de Nicolás Féderman. Conquistador, poblador y cofundador de Bogotá. By JUAN FRIEDE. Bogotá, 1961. Editorial Buchholz. Pp. 290. Paper. \$2.60.

The story of almost all of the conquistadors is one of tragedy. They endured inhuman suffering and visited it upon their victims, what glory they enjoyed was fleeting, and they usually died violently or forsaken. The tale of the conquistador Nicolás Féderman follows this pattern, but according to Juan Friede his tragedy is compounded by the fact that he was a German and an agent of the Welsers of Augsburg. As a German he was resented by the Spaniards, who regarded the conquest as a national undertaking, and he was suspected of Lutheranism. As an agent of the Welsers he was handicapped by a conflict of interest between making profits and governing a colony.

Upon these two points lies the essence of Juan Friede's study. It is an effort to present Nicolás Féderman and other German conquistadors in a new light. There is little detail of Féderman's explorations that is not found in Germán Arciniegas, *Germans in the Conquest of America*, but Friede maintains that the achievements of the Germans have never been acknowledged. In fact, he believes that their role has been misrepresented. Whereas the Germans have been depicted as extremely cruel in their conquest of Venezuela, Friede argues that these charges stem from irresponsible testimony taken during a *residencia* to which Féderman was subjected in Coro in 1538. He has carefully reviewed this testimony, as well as other pertinent documents in the *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville, and concludes that the Spanish colonists in Coro bore false witness out of hostility towards the Germans, whom they regarded as heretics and alien intruders.

When Féderman returned to Europe in 1540, his troubles with the Welsers began. He was severely criticized by the colonial chronicler,