

BOOK REVIEWS

GENERAL

The Golden Tapestry. By DALE B. J. RANDALL. Durham, 1963. Duke University Press. Notes. Appendixes. Index. Pp. viii, 262. \$8.75.

As the author frankly acknowledges the title of this admirable study begs an explanation, and he proffers it in a lengthy subtitle reading: "A Critical Survey of Non-Chivalric Spanish Fiction in English Translation (1543-1657)." It is, in fact, a prolifically documented, critical analysis of many Spanish works of creative literature and the English versions of them made between the dates indicated. The earlier year marks the first English printing of a Spanish narrative *Tractado . . . de Arnalde y Lucenda* by Diego de San Pedro and the later the publication in English garb of the last of the great picaresque novels, Francisco de Quevedo's searing *Historia de la vida del buscón*. In a little more than a century over one hundred pieces of Spanish fiction were thus imported in a period that approximately coincides with the cultural and political Golden Age of the Peninsula.

At the outset the author makes abundantly clear his purpose, which is to discuss the nature and extent of the Spanish writings of creative genius made accessible to Renaissance English readers by translation. He performs well his self-appointed mission, displaying a sympathy for and an understanding of Spanish literary art not always noted in teachers of English literature, of which subject the author is an assistant professor at Duke University. The work is aptly called a tapestry, for it graphically presents a series of sketches of translators and Spanish writers with interwoven summaries of their work and acute evaluations of the literary efforts of both. James Mabbe, who translated the classic *Celestina* as *The Spanish Bawd*, also *Guzmán de Alfarache* of Alemán and Cervantes' *Exemplary Novels*, and who liked to call himself Diego Puede-Ser, was perhaps the ablest of these translators. Notably popular among the English public were the realistic and satirical writings of Cervantes, Mateo Alemán, and Francisco de Quevedo. Curiously enough Juan Luna's inferior sequel of the brief picaresque masterpiece *Lazarillo de Tormes* and called *Pursuit of the History of Lazarillo de Tormez* ranked a high favorite with Britain's readers.

In general these versions were free renditions varying from fairly literal through an easy paraphrase to a nearly complete retelling with changed endings, and not infrequently they came by way of

French. Some even possessed a literary distinction almost entirely their own, but all testified to a lively concern for the story-telling of a rival people that tended to rise and fall in correlation with Anglo-Spanish political relations. However, the sustained acceptance of these writings in England—equally true of the non-fiction of the Peninsula which the author does not discuss—proves that they constituted a universal literature that transcended national and linguistic frontiers. Four appendices of lists of translators and translations round out *The Golden Tapestry* which is a highly sophisticated, critical analysis of Anglo-Spanish narratives presented with a freshness of language, spiced by an occasional colloquialism, that helps to keep the reader's interest from flagging.

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The Revolt of the Catalans. By J. H. ELLIOTT. London, 1963. The Cambridge University Press. Maps. Charts. Notes. Illustrations. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvi, 624. \$12.50.

In February, 1640, surveying the ruins of his Catalan policy, the Conde Duque de Olivares, first minister of Philip IV, was bewildered and discouraged. "No king in the world," he wrote bitterly, "has a province like Catalonia." Truly no king did. For generations the separatist, localist Catalans had been a centrifugal force in the development of the Spanish state, defying royal attempts at centralization and Castilianization. J. H. Elliott's excellent study of the Catalan revolt of 1640 is a highly significant chapter out of this struggle.

In Elliott's view two fundamental revolutions took shape in the first four decades of the seventeenth century. One movement had its roots in the grievances of the disenchanting Catalan aristocracy and bourgeoisie. These two classes, frustrated in their quest for posts at the Spanish royal court, also resented the king's penchant for appointing Castilians or Catalan puppets to high political and religious offices in the principality. Viceregal appointments went too often to a Castilian or a Catalan nobleman anxious to ingratiate himself with the king; bishoprics ordinarily went to Castilians with Catalans having to content themselves with abbacies and canonries. Questions of protocol—the privilege of wearing side arms, covering or uncovering in the king's presence, the language to be used in Catalan sermons—were also occasions for bitter quarrels.

For the aristocracy and bourgeoisie the Conde Duque de Olivares was the principal villain. They saw in his policies (1621-1643) an