

Catalans forcibly to their knees. As a chapter in the decline of Spain, the events leading to the Catalan revolution clearly manifested the weaknesses of the Spanish Empire in the first decades of the seventeenth century. They also demonstrated the Catalan tendency toward particularism and separatism, a perennial problem for Spain, but one which may well be, as Salvador de Madariaga argues, an obvious sign of the inherent Spanishness of Catalonia. In sum this is a superb monograph by a young scholar who is now joining the ranks of Hispanic American historians. He should be welcomed warmly.

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*Portrait of Spain.* Edited by THOMAS F. MCGANN. New York, 1963. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Illustrations. Bibliography. Pp. xix, 390. \$6.95.

In *Portrait of Spain* Thomas McGann has assembled selections from English and American writers who have been to Spain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The accounts describe all the major regions of the country: Catalonia (Rose Macaulay), Aragon (George Ticknor, George Orwell), Extremadura (Archer M. Huntington), Andalusia (Washington Irving, Benjamin Disraeli, William Dean Howells), Majorca (Robert Graves), and many others. The result is an unusual kind of guide book in the form of reminiscences of literary merit, good, entertaining reading both for persons who know the country and who are interested in it from afar.

But this is not the editor's only purpose. If it were, why choose only accounts in English? What of the Frenchmen and Germans who have admired Spain, not to speak of the Spaniards themselves, who have dwelt with passion on the nature of their country? The answer is that he has a second objective, as he states in the introduction, to understand why some of the most cultivated British and American minds have been fascinated and obsessed by Spain. The obvious reason leaps out from many of the accounts: Spain is romantic and mysterious. Longfellow, Disraeli, and Irving see brigands behind every rock ("the dark fiendish countenances which peep at [the traveller] from the folds of the Spanish cloak in every town and village" [Longfellow]). (But they never met a brigand face to face.) Havelock Ellis and Waldo Frank feel they have personally discovered the national character of Spaniards when they echo traditional clichés about African character, individuality, religiosity, and militancy. (How could anyone who claimed to know Spain say in the 1920's: "The Spaniard elected a form of achievement and a form of truth

which he could reach: and as he reached it, he stopped moving. Truth became the Church of Rome: he attained that truth and rejected every other"? [Waldo Frank]) Under the editor's apt heading "A Victorian Yankee confronts Castile," John Hay subtly and unconsciously epitomizes the Anglo-Saxon reaction to Spain in a description of a Madrid bull fight. To the future secretary of state the spectacle calls to mind Christians burning in the Coliseum, but he is as powerless against its pagan atmosphere as Adam was against the apple.

McGann appears to find the same flavor in Spain, "a flavor compounded of danger, violent contrasts among people and scenery, pathos, high humanity, and mystery." Spaniards are for him "unique among human beings." My own feeling is that these passages reveal more about Anglo-Saxon prejudices and the metamorphoses of the black legend than about the essence of Spain. The writers who stayed long enough and had the capacity to remove their cultural blindfolds discovered that Spaniards are fascinating because they are ordinary human beings first and only secondarily because they are products of a different culture: Gerald Brenan above all, then Ernest Hemingway, George Borrow, and George Orwell. McGann's choice of their texts is superb. They are the true portrait painters. The rest, however readable, hardly get beyond caricatures and tourists' snapshots.

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*Alexander von Humboldt*. By LOTTE KELLNER. London, New York, and Toronto, 1963. Oxford University Press. Maps. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 247. \$5.75.

Lotte Kellner is a lecturer in Physics at the Imperial College of the University of London. She has found in England her second home. It is her intention with this book to acquaint those who speak English with Alexander von Humboldt. This should be easy in the United States as even today Humboldt is well known and after all Humboldt was a great admirer of the United States since from the political point of view—although he was personally cold—he saw the United States as a "dynamic Cartesian whirl." With regard to England, even though he valued her many admirable traits he had many reservations, and as to love for England he placed her after France. And indeed the English have not always understood Humboldt and have not accepted his opinions. It must be stated that hate and contempt have never existed on either side.

I welcome the appearance of the book by Lotte Kellner because the