

*His Excellency, the Ambassador.* By ERICO VERISSIMO. Translated by LINTON LOMAS BARRETT and MARIE McDAVID BARRETT. New York, 1967. Macmillan Company. Pp. 439. \$6.95.

Gabriel Heliodoro Alvarado, ambassador from El Sacramento to the United States, is a fine figure of a man, both in and out of bed. Unfortunately he is also a cardboard caricature, as is everyone else in this novel. Latin Americans are nearly all corrupt and sex-mad, Americans calloused and tasteless. Verissimo has made a few exceptions—a Sacramentan poet-hero, obsessed with liberty and guilt feelings, and for good measure two "ugly Americans"—but these are cardboard too. The first three-fourths of the book is filled with the sort of politico-erotic Washington goulash popularized by *Advise and Consent*; the last fourth is taken straight from news dispatches about Castro's coming to power, with names and places changed. In other words, this is a formula novel. Too bad that the formula was not better guarded.

D. M. P.

*Spanish Life in the Late Middle Ages.* Selected and translated by KENNETH R. SCHOLBERG. Chapel Hill, 1965. University of North Carolina Press. Appendices. Pp. 180. Paper. \$4.00.

Although this book is published in a series of "Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures," it is simply an anthology of translations, not a scholarly work. Its purpose is "to give English speaking readers some idea of the life in and around the court of Juan II. It does not pretend to be either a history, sociological study, or literary *précis*" (p. 8). Under eight different headings, Scholberg offers in translation selected chapters from works dealing with fifteenth-century Spanish life. Each selection is introduced by a very short and general introduction. Students for whom this book has been conceived may wish that the author had paid greater attention to their needs with a more specific and illuminating presentation of the indi-

vidual selections. They also will feel that the translations often follow too closely the baroque syntax and style of the originals, thus impairing the reading and understanding of the text (see pp. 24, 69). Since Scholberg restricts himself to writers of the fifteenth century, it must be questioned to what extent his anthology can be considered representative of Spanish life in the late Middle Ages.

V. C.

*First Around the World. A Journal of Magellan's Voyage.* By GEORGE SANDERLIN. New York, 1964. Harper and Row. Illustrations. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 196. \$3.95.

For every volume published on Magellan in English since the World War, five have appeared on Columbus; yet Magellan's voyage stands as the greatest feat of navigation in history. Sanderlin's new book is thus a welcome addition to the small shelf of "Magellana." Though written for the young student, the work will have a far wider interest, for the author makes history not only absorbing but downright exciting.

A twenty-six-page introduction in easy conversational style places Magellan's life in the context of sixteenth-century navigational and geographical knowledge, rivalries, restlessness, and avarice. The "journal" which follows is pieced together from various sources, largely, of course, the account of Antonio Pigafetta, but beginning with the letter of Maximilian Transylvanus (which precedes Pigafetta in Ramusio) and a passage from Las Casas. Next are several contemporary documents, including part of Magellan's second will, and there are excerpts from Gaspar Corrêa's *Lendas da Índia*, from the account of an unknown Genoese pilot with Magellan's fleet, and from the *Deroteiro* of another pilot, probably Francisco Albo. Though the captain-general did not survive to tell his own tale, there is fortunately no dearth of contemporary accounts. Drawing from these, Sanderlin begins with Magellan's voyage as an idea, carries the reader