

An entire volume devoted to the Erie canal will probably be considered the most adequate treatment of the series. It embraces the various projects for improving the Mohawk, the dreams of the early promoters of an internal waterway between the Atlantic and the Lakes, the memorial written by De Witt Clinton and presented to the legislature of New York in 1816, the details of the canal construction, its local influences, and the later agitation for an enlarged waterway. Readers will miss the local color which lent a charm to the earlier numbers of this series. The chapter on local influences of the canal comes nearest to this need and is a bit of work really worth doing. It seems to be taken almost entirely from *The Influence of the Erie Canal upon the Population along its Course*, a monograph by Julius Winden in the University of Wisconsin series.

The various agitations for a half-century looking to the enlargement of the Erie canal to a ship-canal are fully described in the concluding chapter. The author thinks its possibilities would place New York in the lead in promoting water transportation in the inland region as she was when the canal was first built. However, it would come from the canalization of rivers rather than from building artificial waterways.

EDWIN E. SPARKS.

The South American Republics. By THOMAS C. DAWSON, American Minister to Santo Domingo. Volume II. Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama. [The Story of the Nations.] (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1904. Pp. xiv, 513.)

A History of South America, 1854-1904. By CHARLES EDMOND AKERS. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company; London: John Murray. 1904. Pp. xxviii, 696.)

WHEN Mr. Dawson's first volume appeared it had the field to itself, but with the second there comes a competitor. Yet Mr. Akers's new book is practically a history of his own times, while Mr. Dawson has given us a two-volume collection of historical primers, each primer dealing with a South American republic and being complete in itself.

This method of treating the subject was fairly successful in the first volume, for Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay have had but little common history. In the second, on the other hand, it has involved repetition and confusion, for the countries here treated have often been the scenes of different acts in the same drama. This is especially true of the period of the wars of independence. Two great generals, Bolivar in the north and San Martin in the south, gradually forced the Spaniards to make a final stand in Peru, where they were eventually defeated by the combined armies of north and south. The material for writing a reliable popular account of this great struggle is more accessible than that for any other period, and yet the method of treatment has so chopped up and distributed the campaigns as to make

the most reliable part of the book the most confused. Bolivar's campaigns are quite inverted. First one reads of their ending (p. 96); two hundred pages later we have the middle (p. 318); while still farther on the beginnings are told twice (pp. 364 and 433).

Of recent events in the states east of the Andes Mr. Dawson was enabled in the first volume to speak very clearly and comprehensively by reason of his long residence in Brazil and his personal acquaintance with many of the leading men in those countries. But in the second his exposition of contemporary history is disappointing. There are too many names and dates and too few explanatory remarks. There is a tendency to dwell on the period of the conquest and to leave untouched the difficult business of untangling the innumerable revolutions of the past eighty years. For instance, of the part devoted to Peru, less than half is given to the story of the republic, yet most persons will prefer to read the story of the Incas and their fall in the charming pages of Prescott, especially as Mr. Dawson has nothing to add to the old traditions of "that magnificent civilization which the Spaniards destroyed".

It may be claimed indeed that the book does not pretend to make any addition to our knowledge of South American history, but even as a collection of historical primers its value is seriously impaired by evidences of hasty or inaccurate compilation. Take for instance the account of the Scots settlement on the isthmus of Darien (p. 429). "Twelve thousand Scotchmen" are made to land on "the unsettled Central American coast north from the Isthmus". "Two small supplementary expeditions arrived in 1699 to find assembled a Spanish fleet and army", and after the colony was definitely abandoned the coast was "placed under the jurisdiction of the captain-general of Cuba, and the claim that Colombia set up after she became an independent nation has never held good against the Central American republics." Now in the first place there were only twelve hundred Scots; secondly they landed on the coast southeast from the isthmus; thirdly the Spaniards did not arrive until six months after the first "supplementary expedition" and three months after the second; and finally this coast has always been considered as a part of Colombia until very recently. As there are no foot-notes, one is left to wonder whence came these remarkable statements.

To attempt to read the volume through is sufficiently confusing, but the publishers have not improved matters. The illustrations do not illustrate. A picture of "native costumes in Chile about 1840" (p. 179) faces the account of San Martin's campaign of 1818. A fine picture of the "railroad bridge between Santiago and Valparaiso" (p. 169) is used to illustrate the story of San Martin's crossing the Andes, which is described as a very difficult undertaking, and yet the text gives a false impression, if he had a railroad and bridges like the one depicted! Moreover the maps are inadequate and out of date.

Mr. Akers's publishers, on the other hand, have made the use of an atlas unnecessary. Indeed any one who possesses an atlas with

better maps of South America than this volume contains may consider himself fortunate. They are clear, complete, and thoroughly up-to-date. One cannot help smiling, however, to see emblazoned on the cover of this excellent volume the coat of arms of Mexico! As an earnest of what is to be expected of the illustrations it is misleading, for the latter are well chosen and well placed. They consist for the most part of portraits of historical celebrities and add greatly to the value of the book.

The scope of the volume appears from the title-page to be the fifty years from 1854 to 1904. As a matter of fact, with the exception of the Paraguayan War, 1865-1870, little space is given to anything preceding 1875. There are, to be sure, thirty-four pages of historical introduction, in which the uninformed reader will be dismayed at the array of names and dates and misled by the generalizations. Such statements as this, that the colonists in Spanish America came "from the scum" of the population of Spain and that they were "outcasts in their own country" (p. 6), need great modification. Again it is hardly true that "The beginning of the nineteenth century found the Spanish colonies seething with discontent against the rule of the mother country, and so ripe for revolt that a spark only was necessary to fire the train" (p. 19). Surely Miranda applied several sparks in 1806 without causing any explosion, and San Martin almost had to force revolt down the throats of the Peruvians as late as 1822. But these defects are more than compensated for by what follows.

Practically the book is an endeavor to give a vivid picture of the South America of the generation just closing, and for this task Mr. Akers is exceptionally well equipped. As South American correspondent of the *London Times* for fourteen years, he acquired an intimate knowledge of men and events besides an ability to tell clearly and comprehensively just what one wants to know. It is a pity that he has not told us of what campaigns and revolutions he was an eye-witness, for it is not difficult to realize that no one but an eye-witness could have described many of the operations as he has done. In fact the chief value of the book is that it can be used as a trustworthy contemporary history. It has the defects that the account of an eye-witness must have, even when he has been able to get the perspective of a few years and to hear the other side. But it has the advantage of being written by a writer trained to see clearly.

The most welcome feature of the book is the comprehensive treatment of important events. Yet scarcely less valuable are the comments on existing conditions. A few extracts of this character with regard to the administration of justice may prove enlightening. In Brazil "corruption is common in all branches of the judiciary, and the cost of litigation is abnormally high" (p. 313). In Argentina "in the minor branches opportunities for corrupt practices are widespread, and complaints are heard in all quarters of the ignorance and venality of magistrates and minor officials." Even the Supreme Court is not with-

out taint of bribery and corruption (p. 125). In Chile, "while the courts are unsatisfactory, the condition of the police is infinitely worse, and protection for life and property can hardly be said to exist in any outlying districts" (p. 418). "The administration of justice in Perú could not be more unsatisfactory than it is. . . . To obtain a favourable verdict bribery must be practised, and it is a question of who has the longest purse when a decision is reached. To this widely sweeping assertion there are no exceptions, the Supreme Court being no cleaner than the lower tribunals, it differs only in that payment must be on a higher scale" (p. 536). In Venezuela "corruption is deep-rooted in both higher and lower branches of the Judiciary" (p. 636).

One reason for this deplorable state of affairs is illiteracy. More than half of the population of Brazil are unable to read or write (p. 312). "The importance of this vital national question does not appeal to the majority of Brazilians" (p. 313). Even in Argentina there is "little public interest shown in educational questions" and this "is responsible for the absence of an effective system of instruction" (p. 124). In Chile the trouble seems to be that "constant wrangling in Congress has so engrossed the attention of the Chambers that no time has been available for the consideration of the true interests of the country" (p. 411). The death-rate in Valparaíso is 67 per thousand and in Santiago 72 (p. 411). Furthermore "to such a height has the abuse of alcohol now grown in Chile that official statistics show the consumption to be nearly four gallons of raw spirit annually per head of population." "Spirit distilled from rotten wheat, potatoes, maize, and the refuse from the wine-making establishments, is the poison eating into the life of the Chilean nation" (p. 413). Politically, the most striking fact in South America is the paramount influence which each president has in the choice of his successor. "Official influence is the main factor in all South American electoral contests", and the fact that a candidate can count upon the retiring president and his friends is ample assurance that he will be elected (p. 304). Nothing could better illustrate the difference between the South American republics and the United States, unless it be the venality of the courts.

On the whole Mr. Akers fully realizes the enormous economic possibilities as well as the stumbling-blocks in the way of substantial progress. Although hopeful for the future, he declares that "what is necessary to consolidate peace is the adequate administration of justice throughout these republics, protection for civil rights, and a more liberal system of public education" (pp. 649-650). Rarely does one find a book at once so useful to the specialist and so interesting to the tyro.

HIRAM BINGHAM.

Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee. By Captain ROBERT E. LEE. (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company. 1904. Pp. xiii, 461.)

THESE recollections and letters of General Lee, by his youngest son,