
THE NEW BOOKS

BANANA GOLD by Carleton Beals (LIPPINCOTT. \$3.00)

"BANANAS", the President of Guatemala remarked to Mr. Beals, "are the yellow gold of Guatemala." The remark evidently suggested the title of Mr. Beals's book, but the title gives no accurate indication of what the book itself contains. There are a few rather brief references to the banana industry and the people engaged in it, and when we come to Honduras, "the kingdom *par excellence* of the banana companies", we find a sharp indictment of a situation in which the companies go nearly scot-free of taxes, absorb three-fourths of the national revenue "to pay off loans at exorbitant rates contracted in moments of revolutionary stress", and, in the case of the United Fruit Company, kill all local trading enterprises by selling American goods imported duty free. All this, however, is incidental to the dramatic story of travel and adventure which forms the main substance of the book, in whose telling Mr. Beals shows, even more strikingly than in his previous books, his rare gift of vivid description and arresting characterization.

The book falls into two parts. The first, an account of a journey through Guatemala, Salvador and Honduras, narrates an adventure in which crowded trains and mud-be-spattered automobiles, filthy hotels and uncertain meals, conversations with all sorts and conditions of people, village life, police brutality, drinking and dancing, sweltering heat, dust and vermin, customs formalities, seductive girls, ancient ruins, and imposing

tropical scenery mingle with excursions into history and recent politics in a panorama such as only Mr. Beals can paint. Whether to a traveller less eager and sensitive the countries and their peoples would seem as picturesque as they seem to him is open to question, but no living student of Central America has succeeded so well in transferring to words the fruits of a keen and sympathetic observation.

The second half of the book is the story, now told in full for the first time, of Mr. Beals's famous visit to Sandino, the Nicaraguan popular leader, and his interviews with American officers and others afterwards. For sheer nerve, audacity, and physical endurance the search for Sandino would be hard to match, and Sandino himself stands out in the picture as a very different person from the brutal and lawless "bandit" of the American press and naval officialdom. "Of course," said General Feland, when Beals faced him with his story, "in the army we use the word 'bandit' in a technical sense, meaning the member of a band", but when asked whether, "in the publicity which you give out to the United States . . . you explain to the dear public" that a technical term is being used, Feland could only reply: "Guess you've got us on the hip there".

One suspects that Mr. Beals, in his feeling for the rights and aspirations of Central American peoples, is a bit over-willing to get American intervention "on the hip", that he draws somewhat harshly the features of the American officials whom he met, and that Sandino is viewed through glasses that are

at least slightly tinted. At most, however, such over-emphasis is a natural defect of the quality. It is well that the romantic elements he discovers and his sensitive appreciation of things that are different should be set out in the vivid fashion given them here, for of what is sordid and mercenary we have long since heard quite enough.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

THE COMING OF SOUTH AMERICA

by Henry Kittredge Norton (JOHN DAY. \$3.50)

THIS book embodies the observations and reflections which Mr. Norton made during nearly a year spent in studying political and economic developments in the leading South American countries under the auspices of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Not many of the observations are very penetrating and the reflections are hardly profound; but the reader who can be contented with a pleasantly written journalistic sketch of conditions in Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile will find the book well up to date and usefully informing. Mr. Norton does well to point out that the term "Latin America" is a misnomer, since it not only does not describe accurately the Indian, Negro, and mixed racial elements of the population, but tends to obscure the differences which exist between the various South American countries. On the other hand, the revolutions which occurred in 1930-31 in the five countries which he studied seem to have differed more in incidents than in fundamental causes. In all of them dependence upon the export of some single product is out of proportion to the benefits accruing from other forms of industry or trade.

Anti-American feeling, Mr. Norton thinks, is not very deep-rooted, notwithstanding the

criticisms of intellectuals and a running fire of newspaper attack, and a good deal of such suspicion as exists he attributes to European propaganda. The great bond is the general desire for American capital and American trade. The latter has been realized in a volume of trade greater than that of Great Britain, Germany and France combined; the gratification of the former has appeared in part in public loans whose history has been an "orgy of irresponsible money-lending". Some of the comments upon the United States and its policy which Mr. Norton met with are not complimentary, and his book suggests that the United States has much to learn about the extent to which South American culture has developed, and the degree to which American ways have been adopted without yielding to the American spirit.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

THE SPIRIT OF BRITISH POLICY *by* Hermann Kantorowicz (OXFORD. \$6.50)

THE primary purpose of this book, the work of an eminent German jurist, is to disprove the notion of the "encirclement" of Germany through the operations of British diplomacy as a cause of the World War. The "encirclement myth" has bulked large in the writings of those who have sought to free Germany from the imputation of "war guilt", and Professor Kantorowicz formerly espoused it, but subsequent study has convinced him that the myth, while responsible for the war, was without foundation in fact. He marshals evidence, including the reports of the last four ambassadors of imperial Germany at London, to show that Great Britain was not seriously disturbed by Germany's commercial expansion, that it did not desire war and made no diplomatic preparations for it, and that the origin of the myth is to be ascribed