

# Latin-Americana

**LATIN AMERICA.** By William Lytle Schurtz. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1941. 378 pp. \$3.75.

**LANDS OF NEW WORLD NEIGHBORS.** By Hans Christian Adamson. New York: Whittlesey House. 1941. 593 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by KATHERINE RODELL

**M**R. SCHURTZ'S book has many merits which the recent crop of Latin American "interpretations," many of them the fruit of a mere six-week's acquaintance with the southern continent, necessarily lack. His is a book of facts, as assembled from his own explorations and re-

searches, carefully checked, and set down in a dispassionate record. There is little that is new here, but the book does what the excellent Royal Institute study of South America did a few years ago in assembling much relevant and scattered information. The reader who wants to view with alarm the Nazi menace, or who seeks a glib answer to the question of what we should do about Latin America, will be dissatisfied with Mr. Schurtz. The facts are all there, but the reader will have to work out the answers for himself.

It is perhaps a pity that a man of Mr. Schurtz's wide knowledge and understanding should elect to keep his own apparently liberal and informed

point of view so much in the background. While he is to be commended for such restraint in these days, when everyone who has taken a Caribbean cruise is a self-constituted authority on Latin American affairs, his opinions would unquestionably be worth listening to. But Mr. Schurtz simply set down all the information he considered useful, and then stopped abruptly, with no attempt to sum up, or to draw any conclusions. There is, however, only one real criticism to be made of Mr. Schurtz's book, and I set it down with regret, for it is difficult to have to report that a book so excellent is at the same time so dull.

"Lands of New World Neighbors," by H. C. Adamson, is a collection of brief accounts of the discovery, exploration, and early history of all the lands in the Western Hemisphere, including the United States. It is written in the self-consciously easy style often employed in an attempt to dramatize history for children. Any self-respecting travel folder contains much of the material here presented, while the "World Almanac," in a fraction of the space, contains much more that is valuable and significant. Those who want to gild their dinner-table conversation with the names of a few conquistadores will perhaps find it useful.

It is unfortunate for the cause of inter-American understanding that, with a very few exceptions, most of the new books on Latin America fall into the category of the superficial but readable, or that of the sound but dull. For this the publishers must take their share of the blame, either because they know so little of Latin America that the most casual observations appear to them profound and newsworthy, or because they feel that the public interest is such that uninspired but factual work will get by.

It is also true, however, that the caliber of the writers who have chosen to investigate Latin America is lamentably low. No one has yet surpassed Darwin's "Voyage of the Beagle" as a travel book, while Bryce's "Observations and Impressions" is worth a dozen of the books produced by the "good will" travelers of the last ten years; and the blind Prescott's "Conquest of Peru" still stands head and shoulders above all the Latin American histories that have since been written. Surely it is not too much to ask that both publishers and authors try to measure up to the standards of the past, even if they cannot surpass them, and that they foster, rather than take advantage of, the genuine public desire really to understand our Southern neighbors.

Katherine Rodell is the author of "South American Primer."

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# War and Integration

*THE IMPACT OF WAR: OUR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY UNDER ARMS.* By Pendleton Herring. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1941. 300 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ERNEST R. DUPUY

**T**HE most remarkable thing about this book is the depth of understanding which Professor Herring has displayed in discussing things military from the only viewpoint which gives a correct perspective—the interrelationship of war with other factors of economics and government in our nation. For several years past the American Military Institute has been urging the mutual education of soldiers and statesmen, each in the others' profession; as corollary, such education, applied in our scholastic institutions, would bring about a more complete understanding of a problem which cannot be solved by scrutiny of any one of its components alone.

Professor Herring's study of our American democracy under arms over a 150-year span does just this. The book, thinks this reviewer, is vital to a realization of what steps democracy in arms must take in totalitarian war.

The author's pungent pen cracks down on irrational thinkers from the beginning. "That men have regarded war as evil is no reason for refusing to consider it as fact. . . . We have been unable to distinguish between the need for military efficiency and the evils of war. Consequently, to express disapproval of war, we have neglected our defenses. An ineffective army thus became a sign of peace."

The failure of both the military and the civilian mind to meet on common ground throughout our history is well brought out. "A regular establishment could not be maintained on a scale sufficient for war purposes. On the other hand, under the militia clause of the Constitution, these forces were so circumscribed that they could not be relied upon for the unseen contingencies of actual war."

Discussing fully and freely the causes of insularity on both sides, Professor Herring remarks:

It would be unfair to hold the military solely responsible for such conditions which are, after all, the price we pay for the subordination of the professional soldier and the limitation of his field. In peace time experimentation seems unduly expensive. We cannot criticize the military for lacking experience since it has been our constant effort to prohibit him from having any such opportunities. We have never adequately prepared in advance for war.

Although much has been made of the "military mind," it is only fair

to acknowledge that we might with equal aptness, talk of the "civilian mind" in relation to war and military affairs. . . . Present-day critics cannot blame our army leadership alone for what they conceive to be the short-comings of our system. Many of these publicists were not heard from until very recently. Now an aroused public is ready to fall upon any scapegoat.

It is unfortunate that Professor Herring, in his analysis of the United States Military Academy, does not appear to have taken full advantage of the West Point gates, which swing open hospitably to all interested in its objectives and curriculum. As a result his criticism falls somewhat short of the point. But he has caught, as so many amateurs in the Army game have not, the fundamentals of West Point training, when he discusses the relationship of the officer to his men and the necessity for the care of those men. "Soldierly virtues go far deeper than the rules of military etiquette; the spirit of the service cannot be achieved in a brief officer-training course. It is not enough to be hard-boiled."

Congress, in its relationship to the Army, gets some severe jolts. "Our military policy," says Herring, "has been confused and contradictory. . . . Hence our military leaders have lacked the basis required for long-range plans of defense. . . . There is no single point at which Congressional responsibility heads up directly for relations with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, or the President as commander in chief. . . . In the face of such formalized irresponsibility, our professional soldiers find it impossible to get that broad, general policy which theoretically forms their basis for planning." And again—" . . . in the spring of 1939 the Military Establishment Appropriation Bill was not seriously debated in the House. . . . With Europe under arms and war about to break loose, the House as our representative assembly concerned itself with other matters."

After surveying industrial mobilization in the World War, the author swings down through what he terms the "decades of divided purposes, 1919-1939," touches on the present defense program, and in scholarly and interesting fashion discusses the influence of war in general on society. He closes with a chapter, "Traditional Values and New Imperatives," in which he handles the American picture without gloves. "To insist upon the perfection of our own social and economic institutions before meeting external

threats," he bluntly states, "is like insisting that we abolish sin before driving away the thieves who are rifling the church poor box. Democracy, like virtue, must be unceasingly sought; it is not something that can be captured and held eternally safe thereafter." He points out that "when we fought the Kaiser we defeated the past; to conquer Hitler is to prevent a Nazi stamp on the shape of things to come." And he lays the cards on the table with the statement: "The question today is what nations are to take the lead in building a new world. The Nazis repudiate the past. The democracies fight to preserve the known values of the past, while trying to meet the problems of the future."

There is a ring of bugles in the author's credo: "Democracy, as the highest form of social life, holds the highest expectations of each man's capacity to cooperate with his fellows. This is the *duty* of all those who would live in a free country. . . . Today new demands are being made. They provide not simply a challenge but an opportunity as well for reasserting through action the duties of citizenship."

The book is well documented by a copious bibliography, and has an adequate index.

## Sophia

by ST. JOHN ERVINE

"Authors are forever trying to find new twists of plot which will capture the attention of the reader. But there has been nothing more startling than the opening of this story, the heroine of which is dead at the end of the first sentence. Mr. Ervine's latest story is ingratiating and heart-warming. There is much discussion of marriage, progress, tolerance and human nature, sounder and more interesting discussion, it should be added, than can be found in many a less fanciful novel."

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