

and Canada. Repeatedly, he categorizes Latin America into three groups: 1) Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Bolivia; 2) Brazil, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Colombia, Paraguay, Ecuador, and Peru; 3) Panama, Cuba, Venezuela, Chile, and Uruguay.

Gussoni also studies the educational systems of Latin America, which he views as transmitting culture, eliminating illiteracy, and making possible scientific research. He relates population increase to illiteracy and levels of educational achievement to economic development. He also considers expenditures for education and the absorptive capacity of the individual countries.

The overall quality varies. The first eight chapters tend at times to be superficial and repetitious. Chapters one and two are introductory, and chapter eight is a résumé of the first seven.

The book reads like a series of printed lectures. At times there is evidence that they were taped and typed without revision. For example, at one point Bagú remarks: "I want to read to you from a United Press news clipping that refers sufficiently directly to this topic. It is a news item published yesterday in *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires" (p. 80).

In general the second half, prepared by Gussoni, is considerably better. On pp. 91 and 92 he does fail to indicate with quotation marks a direct quotation from the *Boletín Económico para América Latina*, and the sources for the tables on p. 96 and the statistics on p. 99 are not given. In the index, however, the sources appear (Cepal, United Nations, UNESCO, etc.).

Both sections lack footnotes and a bibliography, and tables six and seven in the appendix are in reversed order.

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*William Hickling Prescott. A Biography.* By C. HARVEY GARDINER. Introduction by ALLAN NEVINS. Austin, 1969. University of Texas Press. Illustration. Notes. Index. Pp. xxi, 366. \$7.50.

The American Renaissance of the nineteenth century expressed itself with particular brilliance in historical writing. A group of men, possessed of superior literary gifts and a passion for research, left to posterity a rich legacy. No one contributed more to that treasure than William Hickling Prescott.

Prescott's writing has been the subject of much study, but Prescott, the person, has had to wait until now for a thoroughgoing appraisal.

No one is as familiar as C. Harvey Gardiner with the everyday life and gradual maturation of Prescott. With a wealth of detail the biographer places Prescott in the Brahmin circle that nourished and sustained him. His early correspondence foretold the skill later displayed in describing men and places.

In his twenties Prescott had already made a decision (not always followed) to publish only what would add to his reputation. That reputation, as yet, rested mainly on his contributions to the *North American Review*. He had immersed himself in Italian literature, especially epic poetry, which stirred in him a powerful aesthetic response. His creative life thereafter was largely shaped by that impress. To Prescott the conquest of Mexico was “an *epic in prose*, a romance of chivalry, as romantic and as chivalrous as any which Boiardo or Ariosto ever fabled.” “It is without doubt, the most poetic subject ever offered to the pen of the historian” (p. 158). Prescott’s fame was truly earned when, after abandoning other projects, he applied himself to the study of Spanish culture. On January 19, 1826, Prescott wrote: “I subscribe to the History of the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella.”

Three volumes on *Ferdinand and Isabella* (1837) were the first fruits of that study. Six years later came the magnificent *Conquest of Mexico*, to be followed by the *Conquest of Peru* and *Philip the Second*. The vast collection of materials laid before Prescott did not overwhelm him, except in *Philip II*. At the outset, the historian generally had a very clear picture of how he intended to organize his projected volumes. And he always understood the value of promotion in winning success for his publications. Advertising, he insisted, “is the breeze that carries an edition off” (p. 57).

Gardiner devotes comparatively little space to an analysis of Prescott’s histories, feeling, perhaps, that others have sufficiently done so. He corrects many details found in other books on Prescott; for example, he says that the historian’s vision was less impaired than formerly believed. Publications by Prescott, hitherto unidentified, are now given proper attribution. On the question of Prescott’s objectivity Gardiner credits him with possessing more than other scholars are willing to grant.

Of less importance, the biographer’s frequent insertion of social items among more significant matters makes for a disjointed narrative. The reader occasionally feels he is turning the pages of an extended diary. Yet, out of the multitude of details emerges a por-

trait of an attractive human being, whose best books have never ceased to cast their magic spell over countless readers.

New York City

MICHAEL KRAUS

*Foreign Relations of the United States. 1946.* Volume XI: *The American Republics.* Washington, 1969. United States Government Printing Office. Notes. Index. Pp. xv, 1382. \$6.75.

The objectives of American foreign policy in Latin America in 1946 differed not a bit from previous years. The United States wanted political and economic stability—defined, as usual, in State Department terms.

Juan Perón, whom Assistant Secretary of State Spruille Braden called a “typical Fascist,” continued to be the *bête noire* of the Department. Urged on by Braden, State produced the infamous Blue Book, to which the Argentines reacted with “stunned humiliation” and which helped elect Perón. Although the February election was the cleanest in Argentine history, Braden was not impressed. In his opinion it meant that in Argentina, as elsewhere in Latin America, “the fundamental principle involved and the ideals for which we have fought the war are not understood.”

When George S. Messersmith was appointed ambassador to Argentina, the Department instructed him to get Perón to comply with American wishes. Messersmith thought that he was having some success in inducing Perón to take measures against enemy property and agents and against German and Japanese schools, but the Department disagreed, and a quarrel developed. In October 1946 Messersmith tried to frighten the Department into a more tolerant attitude toward Perón by playing up the communist threat, but Washington refused to take it seriously and continued to be anti-Perón. In dealing with Argentina, if the *Foreign Relations* volume is to be believed, the Department operated in a vacuum, for there is but one reference to Perón’s radical social, economic, and antforeign decrees.

In economic matters the Department moved vigorously to protect American interests. When a strike threatened to halt copper production in Chile, Braden—hardly a disinterested observer—informed the *chargé* that the Department opposed the strike and bluntly warned against an interruption in mining operations. The *chargé* learned that the Kennecott stockholders were not “without influence.”