

to Latin America's future. The irrelevance of their role in Latin American urban development is the single sad fact that emerges from this well-intended, but uninspired, book.

By any measure, Damián Bayón has assembled the top architectural minds and practitioners of Latin America. His interviews follow a tight structure—a survey, he calls it—asking a similar set of questions of each architect interviewed. Unfortunately, this device lapses into a constraining rigidity that restricts rather than structures the flow of the conversation. Any lively discussion emerges *in spite of* the questions. A few architects—Rogelio Salmona (Colombia), Fernando Salinas (Cuba), and Eladio Dieste (Uruguay)—manage to transcend these problems and contribute significant commentary on important issues. The remaining architects—Clorindo Testa (Argentina), Roberto Burle-Marx (Brazil), Emilio Duhart (Chile), Pedro Ramírez Vázquez (Mexico), Carlos Colombino (Paraguay), José García Bryce (Peru), and Carlos Raúl Villanueva (Venezuela)—appear almost bored with the banal and predictable questions, and they respond in kind.

Paolo Gasparini's excellent accompanying photographs offer a satisfactory alternative to the text. Generously sprinkled throughout the book, they cover a wide range of historical examples, important contemporary buildings, and illustrate key urban social issues.

In the end, however, one is disturbed by the nagging irrelevance of the entire effort. These brilliant architects have little or no impact on their respective environments. Architecture and urban form are being molded by out-of-control economic forces that preempt the design process and make over the cities in their chaotic image. As Fernando Salinas observes, "architecture is, simply, the outer wrappings . . . it's an instrument, it's a form that sheathes and reflects the life of the society" (p. 98).

Tucson, Arizona

CORKY POSTER

Aspects of the History of Medicine in Latin America. Edited by JOHN Z. BOWERS and ELIZABETH F. PURCELL. New York: Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, 1979. Illustrations. Notes. Appendix. Index. Pp. viii, 196. \$4.00. Paper.

Few facets of Latin American history are more significant than medical history. Disease has been important everywhere, especially in the tropical lowlands and islands where there are so many people of wholly or partly African ancestry and so few Indians. Disease has been important in every period, especially in that first century after initial contact be-

tween Europeans or Africans and any given group of Indians, a period when the morbidity and mortality rate differences among the three were probably greater than at any other time. That first century is not over yet in parts of the Amazon Basin where today America's last genetically and culturally pure Native American tribes wobble on the brink of extinction.

Americanists desperately need a good solid work on the medical history of Latin America. Unfortunately, *Aspects of the History of Medicine in Latin America* is not it. It is not even much of a contribution to the eventual production of such a work. *Aspects* is a collection of papers of wildly varying worth on scattered subjects, held together by little more than the glue of the binding. The authors, with a few exceptions, are not professional historians but physicians, and often seem to be unfamiliar with important secondary works. They might well be forgiven this if they compensated for their historical amateurism with original research and fresh insights drawn from their own experience, but they do not. They have uncovered little of significance that cannot be found in other secondary sources or, better yet, in detailed, dependable, translated, and widely available primary sources, such as those by Diego de Landa and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega.

The authors have expended little effort on interpretation and less on relating the subjects of their papers to Latin American history as a whole or to events in the greater world. *Aspects of the History of Medicine in Latin America* is a depressing example of traditional medical history, i.e., of medical antiquarianism. It includes things of some use to the specialist—a discussion of two colonial documents by Charles R. Boxer, a narration of the Balmis expedition to Venezuela by Ricardo Archila, and compilations of Peruvian diseases and Maya foods by Francisco Guerra and Fernando Cabieses—but the volume is of practically no use to anyone seeking an overview of the medical history of Latin America.

Washington State University

ALFRED W. CROSBY