

BOOKS ABROAD

University of Oklahoma Press

Norman, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

From the *Spring 1946* issue

✱ Alfonso Reyes. *Capítulos de Literatura Española (Segunda Serie)*. México. El Colegio de México. 1945. 295 pages.—The First Series of Alfonso Reyes' Chapters from Spanish Literature was issued in 1939 by La Casa de España en México, the publications of which have been taken over and continued by the Colegio de México. This latter institution is itself one of the great contributions of Alfonso Reyes and of Mexico to cultural co-operation across national frontiers.

The present volume consists of twelve essays, some of them here first published, others reprinted from periodicals of Mexico, Argentina, Italy, Spain and the United States. Two deal with Alarcón, a subject always close to Reyes' heart, and two with Góngora. The range in date of original publication is from 1917 to 1945, and in theme from an imaginary portrait of a Sixteenth Century courtesan to specific recommendations as to an irreducible minimum of readings in Spanish language and literature for foreign teachers of such courses. In style, naturally enough in the case of papers appearing in five countries over a period of twenty-eight years and reflecting light from one of the most receptive, comprehensive and expansive intellects of our time, the range is also wide. Reyes himself alludes to the "mixed character" of a book that brings together within covers philological research, imaginative essays, and entertaining literary chat. The style, however, whatever the special audience or the particular tone, is always unmistakably Reyes—which is to say that it is continuously delightful whether for its lucid depths or its surface iridescence; and the substance too is Reyes, treasure dredged from his salty store of wit and learning.

One would like to see the index of proper names supplemented by a topical index, since the encyclopedic character of Alfonso Reyes' writings makes encyclopedic aids to ready reference desirable for them all. An appendix carries three additional brief commentaries: on Raymund Lully's *Libre del Ordre de Cavayleria*, and on Julio Jiménez Ruveda's and Antonio Castro Leal's respective books about Ruiz de Alarcón. What Reyes says with respect to Castro Leal's contribution to a better knowledge of Alarcón may well serve as a summing-up of the value of Reyes' own voyaging among books and men, as reported in these and other of his papers currently being collected and published. "The continuity of discovery—none is ever completed—continues to be, amid the world's disasters as in that remote instant when first we felt gush forth the spring of our vocation, what most stimulates us to live."—Muna Lee. Department of State, Washington, D. C.

BOOKS ABROAD

University of Oklahoma Press

Norman, Oklahoma, U. S. A.

From the SPRING 1949 issue

- ✎ Alfonso Reyes. *Entre libros*. México. Colegio de México. 1948. 230 pages. —It seems fitting that Alfonso Reyes, the Mexican diplomat and man of letters, should acknowledge the passage of time—he was born in 1889—by beginning to gather in accessible volumes the multifarious product of his active literary life. But we may refuse to consider this harvesting process as proof of the advent of fall and the end of productive growth. The present collection (the third—unless we missed some) contains better than a hundred reviews and notes published between 1912 and 1923 in a variety of literary and philological journals of Mexico and—more especially—Spain. There is something on Musset and Paul Meyer, on Alarcón and Calderón; there is something on a hundred different topics suggested by the reading of books or the assignment of reviews. And there is no red thread except that supplied by Reyes' distinctly personal style, his catholicity of interest, and the somewhat stubborn individualism of his taste.—A. Gode-von Aesch. New York City.