

# Belles lettres and bell ringers

## The Spanish Republics

Joseph A. Brandt. *Toward the New Spain*. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press. 1933. Price \$4.00.

**T**HIS scholarly volume covers one of the most interesting fields of nineteenth-century history: the growth and development of republicanism in Spain. Mr Brandt is the first, so far as the present reviewer knows, to attempt a comprehensive account of this movement. Dealing with a topic that must necessarily concern scholars, or at least a highly cultured public, Mr Brandt's work is above all a study of laborious research, keen analyses, and sound generalizations.

The author opens his study with a seven-page foreword in which he attempts a parallel between the Republic of 1873 and that of 1931. Certain striking analogies are drawn, which if followed to a logical conclusion, lead to gloomy forebodings for the future of the present Republic. However, there is one essential difference that may give us some reassurance. The first republic was the work of a small group of idealists, ably seconded by a group of generals. This is clearly shown by the significant statement that the Revolution of 1868 was in no sense a national plebiscite. The second Republic, on the other hand, came into being as the result of a clear-cut vote of the people. Alfonso's departure was only an incident. Another problem seen as a menace for the second Republic is that of separatism. Here again the Republic of 1931 has apparently solved the problem by granting modified autonomy to Catalonia. It is clear that the author believes that some form of unitarianism is essential for the future greatness of Spain. "If a religion of progress under the Republic may retain the unity of the Spanish provinces, it is possible that Spain may again take her rightful place at the council tables of Europe."

The author then takes up the whole history of Spanish liberalism, beginning with the Constitution of 1812 and ending with the establishment of the Republic of 1931. A thrilling story in which the perjury and cowardice of a dynasty contrasts with the high ideals and moral rectitude of the patriot and the dreamer. As one reads Mr Brandt's brilliant story, three things stand out clearly, the stupidity of the Bourbons, the baneful influence of the military and

the lofty, but impractical idealism of the Republican propagandists. "The Bourbons were unprogressive and were decadent, with one exception, that of Carlos III." Without the aid of the military they would not have lasted. The army has been the real enemy of the Republicans. "It began with increasing frequency to make political demands and with unvarying success." The names of Topete, Prim, O'Donnell, Pavía, Primo de Rivera and Sanjurjo speak eloquently! "Yet"—adds Mr Brandt significantly—"It was a striking commentary on how little the various pronunciamientos represented the real thought of the Spanish people." Equally important was the influence and power of the church. Though the author has not given it the importance accorded the military, yet its monarchical and anti-liberal influence appears on every page. We would have preferred to see this phase of the question developed more fully.

But it is in Book Two, entitled "The Republic of Wit and Poetry," that Mr Brandt rises to heights of real eloquence. All of his enthusiasm and sympathy is reserved for the philosophers and idealists of the first Republic. And rightly so. "No greater group of idealists had ever before dominated Spanish politics—Castelar, Pí y Margall, Figueras, Salmerón, Orense—than this Pleiades of idealism in public life. They were ready to conquer not with cannon but with ideas. Of the five, however, Castelar is the real hero of the book. The story of his attempt to be a republican and at the same time save Spain is tragically told. One cannot help feel as one reads Mr Brandt's stirring account that a dash of Machiavellianism added to the doctrinairism and idealism of these leaders

It is not too much to say that the heart of the Oklahoma literary movement today is Kenneth C. Kaufman, '16as, 19M.A., who is sketched here by Don C. Nabors, '31 art. Mr Kaufman is one of the best critics of western literature, is co-editor of "Books Abroad" and literary editor of "The Daily Oklahoman"



might have saved the first Republic. Nevertheless, these men did not struggle in vain. The leaders of the second Republic have tempered their idealism with reality, and in a spirit of compromise have solved the Catalan problem. And, what is more important, have subordinated the military to civil. Old wines in new bottles? Yes, but more exhilarating and more invigorating.

A wonderful story of progress. In describing it Mr Brandt has been brilliantly successful. He has brought to his task a sound scholarship, a well-balanced enthusiasm and a deep sympathy for his subject. Mr Brandt writes with grace and charm. He never bores; there is always a sense of reality in what he writes. He has unquestionably produced a book that will long remain the authority in its field. While one may challenge a statement or an estimate here and there, the ensemble remains unimpeachable.

STEPHEN SCATORI.

## Touch football

An article on "Touch Football," written by Paul V. Keen, University of Oklahoma intramural athletic director and wrestling coach, appeared in the April number of *The Coach*, monthly magazine distributed to every coach in the nation by the Lowe and Campbell and Horace Partridge athletic supply companies. Mr Keen added touch football to his rapidly-growing intramural program at Oklahoma last fall and the sport proved instantly popular.