

## BOOK REVIEWS

CORONADO'S CHILDREN. *Tales of Lost Mines and Buried Treasures of the Southwest.* By J. Frank Dobie. The Southwest Press, Dallas, Texas, 1930. v-xv, 367 pp. \$3.00.

The ever-alluring subject of buried treasure forms the motif of this handsome volume. From a wide and fruitful knowledge of the southwest, Dobie has gleaned the material for as fascinating a collection of treasure-hunting tales as could be desired.

"*Coronado's Children*" are the persistent treasure-seekers in out-of-the-way parts of the southwest, from the days of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado down to the present. As the author says, they "still have the precious ability to wonder . . . They follow Spanish trails, buffalo trails, cow trails; they dig where there are no trails; but oftener than they dig or prospect they just sit and tell stories of lost mines, of buried bullion by the jack load, of ghostly patrones that guard treasure, and of a thousand other impediments, generally not ghostly at all, that have kept them away from the wealth they are so sure of."

Much of the locale of Dobie's book is southern and central Texas. He devotes much time and space to the search for the elusive Spanish mines of the San Saba valley, to devious ways and means used by the treasure-hunters to detect buried gold and silver, and to supposed spectral guardians of hidden hoards. Again and again he relates in detail the experiences of hunters who actually saw their goals. But, almost invariably, the seeker either proved unable to remember the route back to the essential spot, or else was prevented by unfortunate circumstances from guiding others to it. In a few instances one is led to suspect that the seeker actually found his mine or treasure, but kept his discovery secret.

Some of the tales have long been current in the southwest, and concern treasures still being sought. The Lost Nigger Mine of the Great Bend country in Texas and Coahuila, the famous Breyfogle Mine of Death Valley, Lafitte's pirate treasure,—these and others have been the objectives of countless seekers. Perhaps most sensational and thrilling of all the tales is that entitled "Los Muertos no Hablan" (Chapter X), a description of a typical bloody border raid, with a common denouement. Tales of lost lead and copper mines, buried army pay-checks, and bandit's loot give variety to the collection.

Dobie makes no claim as to the truth or falsity of this collection of tales. His is merely the task of collecting and embellishing them, and he has evidently spent much time in the process, although

many of the stories have been published by him in periodical literature before being issued in this volume. The task has been well done, too, for the book has a true flavor of the Texan plains and the deserts of the farther southwest.

The myth of buried treasure and lost mines is an important part of the folklore of the southwest. Dobie has only scratched the surface of what might well prove a fertile and interesting field of literature. His book is, candidly, merely an effort at entertainment, but it is a most successful one.

**CATTLE.** By William MacLeod Raine and Will C. Barnes. Doubleday, Doran and Company, Garden City, N. Y., 1930. vi-xii, 340 pp. \$2.00.

In the past there have been numerous attempts to summarize the history of the western cattle industry. Some of these efforts have taken the form of learned scientific treatises which by their very thoroughness have been limited to the discussion of small areas of the west. Others have taken the form of personal reminiscences, and hence have also been limited to the experiences of their authors. All have been useful, informative and interesting, although restricted in scope.

But the authors of *Cattle* have tried to present a complete, sweeping summary of the far western cattle industry, with particular reference to Texas, which they consider the source of a large part of our western cattle. They frankly limit themselves to a discussion of the cattlemen of the Trans-Mississippi West, so that the cattleman of the eastern American frontier remains an interesting topic for future writers.

Raine and Barnes regard the western cattle industry as a movement sweeping northward and westward out of Texas. They devote considerable space to explaining the causes of the movement, which lay in the fact that Texas was land-poor and cattle-poor, especially in the years just following the Civil War, a fact which forced her cattlemen to take their animals north through the Indian Territory or west of it, and into Kansas. Then came the railroad builders of the late sixties and the seventies, who at first stimulated the demand for Texan cattle by bringing the eastern markets nearer; but who later ruined the cattleman by bringing the farmer westward in increasing numbers. Steadily the end of the Texan cattle drives was forced westward, up into the Great Plains, forcing the Indian and the buffalo off the stage of western history and breaking the ground for the permanent settler. In the late seventies and the eighties came the great cattle corporations, which over-organized and over-capitalized the cattle industry and caused the bursting of the speculators' bubble. After that the cattleman gave way before barb-wire,

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homesteaders and federal forest rangers, and his activities settled down to an orderly business routine.

This brief summary gives an idea of the general thesis of this excellent book. But many of its chapters deal with special and particularly interesting phases of the whole subject—the trail-towns at the railroad heads, the bitter rivalry of sheepman and cattleman, lawless characters and private wars of the cattle frontier, and the daily life and amusements of the cowboy. The authors also take up the cattle industry as it flourished in particular areas such as New Mexico, Arizona, California and Wyoming. An appendix discusses the methods of the old-time cattleman and the difficulties of his vocation.

In style the book tends to be somewhat rambling and anecdotal. There is a wealth of reminiscent material, which occasionally obtrudes itself into the course of the discussion. A few generalities are evident, such as the assumption that the far western cattle industry is alone worthy of consideration. One can forgive these weaknesses, however, in a work intended for popular reading, because bits of real color and action are thereby introduced. A needless error appears (p. 53), in the statement that Hernan Cortes landed "near Vera Cruz in 1515." (Cortes landed at old Vera Cruz on April 21, 1519.) One feels that the Spanish-Mexican influence upon western cattleman might have been given more of the credit due it. Considerable research is evident on the part of the authors, who have made full use of numerous authoritative monographs on their subject. A bibliography of such works would have proved useful, perhaps, for readers who wished to go farther into the topic.

*Cattle* is undoubtedly the best general popular discussion of the far western cattle industry thus far produced.

RUFUS KAY WYLLYS.

