

REVIEWS

Teletor, Celso Narciso. *Cartilla de Civismo en Lengua Quiché y Castellano*. Guatemala, Mayo de 1942. 155 pp.

This little book will be attacked by the enemies of General Ubico as having some obscurely nefarious purpose; it will be attacked by those decayed *hacendados* who squirm at the suggestion that Quiché might possibly be as legitimate a language as French and English they go to such pains to acquire: the writer wishes to praise it.

Here is a small book written in an important native tongue, not to underline the imminence of Hell or the necessity of increasing taxes, but to tell people who live in thatched houses how to avoid smallpox, what the Judicial Power is, not to waste their money on witch doctors, and the like.

The little chapters of this book were circulated singly in a newspaper, and then gathered up, so that they deal with such topical matters as the National Fair. There is a distant effort to awaken pride in belonging to the native culture: a speech from the Great White Owl of the Lenni Lenape is almost inflammatory in its rejection of substitute Caucasian values, yet here the speech is, in Quiché, alongside some paragraphs on the Día de la Raza. There is an air of frankness and good will about this book. Some of the advice about health and sanitation may be unrealistic: there must be other help besides advice. But it is salutary to even have these matters discussed in Quiché, in a book which is designed for free distribution to a large audience.

The author, Father Teletor, is modest, about his command of Quiché, probably unnecessarily so. He deserves thanks and encouragement. Ultimately books must be written in Quiché by native speakers, and these must deal with just as many topics as Spanish books deal with. When the natives have knowledge of their relationship to the world, then it is up to them to decide if they wish to become bilingual or adopt the Spanish tongue completely. Until there are cookbooks and histories and drama and geographies in the native tongues, the native is walled within the Middle Ages. During 400 years attempts to compel him to learn Spanish have had little success. The *Cartilla de civismo en lengua Quiché* indicates the inevitable course.—[R. H. B.]