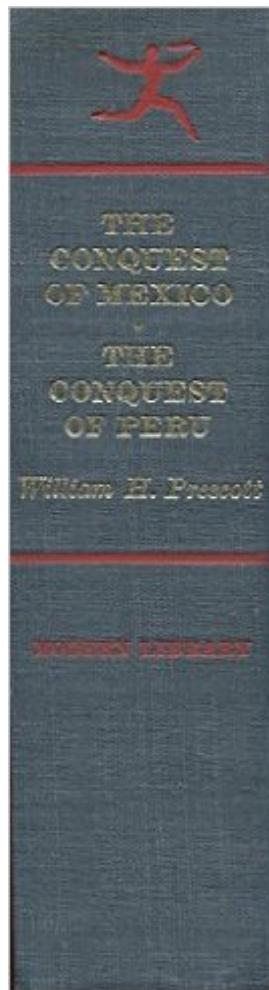


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Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

William Prescott's "History of the Conquest of Mexico" and "History of the Conquest of Peru" are brought together in one volume that provides a solidly researched and detailed account of the Spanish conquest of the Americas. The first volume, describing the Mexican conquest, is the better of the two. In the first chapters, Prescott describes the life and culture of the native Mexican tribes, concentrating on the dominant Aztecs, their religion, customs, achievements in literature, astronomy, agriculture and mechanical arts, and discusses the infighting among the various native princes that set them up for a fall when the Spanish conquistadores landed in the New World.

Prescott writes about the efforts of Bartolomé de las Casas to protect the natives from slavery and how this was rejected on the specious grounds that the Indians had to be brought into contact with the Spaniards in order to be converted to Christianity and slavery was the only way to achieve this end. Prescott describes the conquest of the Caribbean islands of Cuba, Santo Domingo and San Juan de Puerto Rico (as it was then known) as a precursor of the conquest of the Mexican mainland, and how some Indians like Montezuma thought the Spaniards were there for their benefit, whereas others, like Xicotencatl, the Tlascalan chief, were suspicious of the Spaniards' motives from the beginning and tried to unite the native tribes against them. The Noche Triste, brought on by the arrogance and cruelty of the Spanish captain Pedro de Alvarado, is described in such detail that the reader is totally caught up in the narrative. One finishes this volume filled with admiration at

Prescott as an historian and a writer, and regretting what a great civilization was destroyed out of pure greed and lust for gold.

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