

## Cambridge History

THE CAMBRIDGE MEDIEVAL HISTORY.

Planned by J. B. BURY. Edited by J. R. TANNER, C. W. PREVITÉ-ORTON, Z. N. BROOKE. Volume V, Contest of Empire and Papacy. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1926. \$13.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES H. HASKINS

Harvard University

“**A**NOTHER damned thick, square book,” said the Duke of Worcester on the receipt of a new volume of Gibbon’s “Decline and Fall,” and such may be the reaction of many a reader on taking up a volume which devotes one thousand pages to a period which Gibbon dismissed in four chapters. The editors of the “Cambridge Medieval History” do not, however, expect their work to be “on every table and almost on every toilette,” to quote the complacent phrase of the matchless “Autobiography;” it is written for scholarly reference rather than for popular or even continuous reading, and in general its aim is well fulfilled. Nowhere else in English can we find a better summary of present-day knowledge of the Middle Ages, set forth soberly and compactly, without flourish but without needless dryness.



The seventeen contributors to the present volume are almost wholly British. The chapters from the competent hands of MM. Chalandon and Halpern and the late Count Ugo Balzani make more glaring the absence of any German contributions to a period in which German affairs bulk large; but the English writers know their way about the continental literature of their subjects, as may be further seen from the hundred pages of elaborate bibliography. The scholarship of the volume is reasonably up to date, and occasionally, as in the Anglo-Norman chapters of the regretted W. J. Corbett, there is something definitely novel. If the style is more interesting than in many of its predecessors, this may be due in part to the interest of the topics treated.

The period here covered, ca. 1050-1200, is one of the most important in the whole series, comprising the struggle between Empire and Papacy, the Crusades, the Norman Conquest of England and Sicily, the Angevin Empire, the rise of towns and the spread of commerce, the twelfth-century revival of learning, the emergence of French poetry, the great epoch of Romanesque architecture and the beginnings of Gothic. For those who must think in biographical terms, it is the age of Hildebrand and St. Bernard, of William the Conqueror, Henry II and Frederick Barbarossa, of Anselm and Abelard and Chrétien of Troyes; it is also the age of the little known scholars who brought Arabic science to the West and the unknown architects who built the great cathedrals. How much of all this will find its way into the Cambridge series, it is too early to say without a glimpse of the unpublished sixth volume, for which many of the more cultural topics are apparently reserved. The fifth is limited to the church and the principal countries, Germany, Italy, France, and England, and is largely political and constitutional. Thus there is more on the origin and structure of the towns than on the occupations of their inhabitants, more on the institutions of the church than on its life. If this prove disappointing to devotees of social history, it is well to remember that it is just this institutional framework which it is hardest for the reader to supply, and when once this is grasped it is not hard to fill it in from other and more popular books.



The tone throughout is realistic and concrete rather than rhetorical. Thus the Crusades are viewed less as an outburst of religious zeal than as a phase of the continuous struggle between East and West, and, although the reviewer is not convinced that this chapter gets to the bottom of the subject, it is pointed out that their results are hard to distinguish from the general history of their epoch. "It is indeed impossible to set down any general effects which the Crusades had upon feudal society as a whole," a statement in refreshing contrast to Gibbon's assertion that "the conflagration which destroyed the dull and barren trees of the forest gave air and scope to the vegetation of the smaller and nutritive plants of the soil." On the intellectual side "St. Louis, as Joinville shows him to us, or Joinville himself, was not intellectually changed by his crusading." The "illustrative or pictorial" numbers of the chroniclers also dwindle before critical examination: the crusaders at the most are

numbered in tens, not hundreds, of thousands, just as the army of William the Conqueror cannot have exceeded 5,000 men, although in that age "even 5,000 men were an almost fabulously large force to collect and keep embodied for any length of time, nor were there any precedents for attempting to transport a large body of cavalry across the sea." From a fresh analysis of Domesday Book it is shown that the Conqueror's annual revenue from rural sources was about £73,000, and its distribution is examined in an illuminating fashion. It is suggested that the anarchy under Stephen was less widespread and less destructive than is commonly supposed, while writs and pipe rolls are made to yield new evidence for the bureaucracy of Henry II.

There is much in the volume for the lawyer if he be historically minded. Henry II is pictured as the greatest lawyer of his time, a strong statement that, and his fame still rests "on his achievement in setting English lawyers upon the paths that they have trodden for seven hundred years, and are indeed treading yet." The longest chapter of all is that dealing with Roman and canon law through the Middle Ages, the work of Professor H. D. Hazeltine who now occupies Maitland's chair at Cambridge. A native of the common-law state of Pennsylvania, a graduate of Brown University, the Harvard Law School, and the University of Berlin, the author possesses the many-sided training necessary for his theme and views it in the wide perspective of the general history of European civilization. Both Roman and canon law are treated as emanations of ancient Rome, the former already perfected under the Empire, the latter then only beginning its evolution, but both constituting a part



Sir John Dineley, Bart., and His Proclamation to the  
Ladies of Great Britain.

From "The Marriage Market," by Charles Kingston  
(Dodd, Mead).

of the world's Roman inheritance. The central point in the long medieval development is the revival of legal science in the twelfth century, when Italy becomes "for a while the focus of the whole world's legal history," and "in law, as in art, letters, and other features of culture, Italian history is at the same time world history." In tracing the influence of Italian jurisprudence down to the Renaissance Professor Hazeltine emphasizes its influence upon the common law, not only upon the form of books like Bracton, but upon procedure, and substantive law. Whatever may have been the debt of Equity to civil and canon law, the courts Christian shaped the law of wills and matrimonial causes, and even a thing so English as the law of the sea is deeply indebted to the medieval maritime codes and to the civilians who sat as judges in the Admiralty courts.

Another valiant but less successful attempt at condensation is found in the fifty-page essay of Mr. W. H. V. Reade on medieval philosophy. Independent and stimulating, it is full of debatable matter, nor is it always abreast of the most recent scholarship. The author is unfamiliar with the latest researches on the translations from Greek and

Arabic; he is unacquainted with Abelard's "Glosses on Porphyry" as published by Geyer; and he can write of Roger Bacon's astrology in ignorance of the studies of Professor Lynn Thorndike. In extenuation it must be said that there is no field of medieval studies in which investigation has in recent years been more active.

# Irish Annals

HISTORY OF IRELAND, 1798-1924. By SIR JAMES O'CONNOR. New York: George H. Doran Co. 1926. \$12.

Reviewed by EDMUND CURTIS  
Trinity College, Dublin

THESE two volumes, the work of many years, make a contribution to Irish history notable not only for the vast amount of information contained but also for the new angle from which the author surveys the Anglo-Irish struggle of the last century and a half. We have had it treated from the Nationalist side and from the Unionist side, but seldom if ever from the point of view—possible only to an Irish Catholic of Celtic blood and patronymic—that England's intentions were good and her actions often beneficent, that her rule in general was of enormous and lasting benefit, and that the Union of 1800 was a fair bargain, which however in the long run proved a failure, not for intrinsic reasons in the Act itself, but because of the essential religious and racial differences of the two islands. Judge O'Connor's purpose is to show us how and why the Union failed. In doing so, he turns aside frequently to make many observations, many amusing, some penetrating, and not a few (to Irish Nationalists) unpalatable, on Irish leaders and parties, and on Irish racial, climatic, economic, and religious characteristics. Whether one is amused, convinced, or annoyed by these, it cannot be denied that the main part of O'Connor's work is a serious and sustained attempt to cover the larger aspects of Irish history since the extinction of Grattan's Parliament.

His work is based on extensive reading and is abundantly documented, so that serious students of Irish history, after getting through their Bagwell and Lecky, must now pass on to O'Connor. His chapter on the financial relations between England and Ireland since the Union is a masterly handling of a most complicated and polemical question. On the Catholic versus Protestant question, and the attitude of Catholic theologians towards rebellion and sedition we must listen to him with respect. His treatment of O'Connell as a windbag and buffoon, void of honest and constructive ideas, is perhaps unjust and superior from one who would aspire to the historian's gift of understanding men and movements in relation to their times. In this matter the "Liberator" is not the only victim of O'Connor's lash, for many Irish heroes of the popular and eloquent type fall under his displeasure. But all that is consistent with his main thesis that the Union failed because the Anglo-Irish conflict, which according to him might have been confined to the questions of land-tenure and religious equality, was whipped up by popular leaders of the O'Connell type into a racial war in which Ireland "reached the most amazing depths of self-deception," until the supreme folly was reached in the "Irish-Ireland movement" of our own times, which he characterizes as "full of absurdities and extravagances."

We could wish that in treating of men still living or names dear to the Irish memory O'Connor could have refrained from some personalities, but it is hard for an Irishman to restrain the national sense of the comic. He represents what we may call the Catholic-Whig position to which his bishops and respectable leaders had come a hundred years ago, that of a distaste for nationalism and proletarian movements and a taste for the English as against the Gaelic language: he says that "the Irish national movement was in essence a struggle between a Catholic and a non-Catholic civilization," and that is why, though with many misgivings, he accepts the Irish Free State, which however has no place for him, as the inevitable and only possible solution of the long strife. It brings Ireland, he says, political freedom, but what is better still, her intellectual freedom, for the Anglo-Irish conflict made correct thinking impossible.

While appreciative of constructive leaders and thinkers like Davitt, O'Connor has little sympathy for the idealists of the Gaelic and old-Irish movements or for the language revivalists, and he is in-



adequate on the importance, quality, and direction of recent Anglo-Irish literature. To think of Irish life, political, religious or social, as static and unified may appeal to some minds, but so many strands, Gaelic, Protestant, English, Catholic, have been interwoven in the national life and tradition that the Irish character remains still delightfully expressive, varied, and individual, and its future interestingly uncertain. This, many think, is the great creation of Ireland, more valuable than mere economic wealth or political solidarity, and refreshing by contrast with the uniformity of great modern states. To believe in this is to believe in tolerance, and hence views so untraditional and strongly expressed as Judge O'Connor's, even if often unwelcome to Irish Nationalists and to Irish Protestants, too, must be welcomed and examined.

## Negro Folk-Lore

NEGRO WORKADAY SONGS. By HOWARD W. ODUM and GUY B. JOHNSON. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1926. \$3.

FOLK BELIEFS OF THE SOUTHERN NEGRO. By NEWBELL NILES PUCKETT. The same. \$5.

Reviewed by JOHN HARRINGTON COX

Author of "Folk Songs of the South"

ONE of the most striking things in modern scholarship is the way it is turning the light upon the Negro and his folk-lore. To the literary man and the sociologist this vast field has a strange fascination. Only one who has endeavored to work in this subject can appreciate its illusiveness. Its profundity and the many angles from which it may be attacked are drawing to it some of the best equipped investigators of the day. To the long list of books and articles on the Negro and his songs at least three outstanding volumes were added last year, namely, "On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs," by Dorothy Scarborough; "The Book of American Spirituals," by James Weldon Johnson, and "The Negro and His Songs," by Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson. No doubt this alluring and almost illimitable field is to be the happy hunting ground of the sociologist and folk-lorist for some time to come.

"Negro Workaday Songs" is a most admirable presentation of the subject. Although primarily a study in sociology, it is scarcely less interesting as a literary production. All the songs were taken directly from Negro singers and the selection of the specimens presented was evidently made with an eye to literary appreciation. The discussions are exceptionally readable. One senses the subtle humor and the weariness of the long road in

I done walk till,  
Lawd, I done walk till  
Feet's gone to rollin',  
Jes' lak a wheel,  
Lawd, jes' lak a wheel.

The book rises to its climax in the chapter, "John Henry: Epic of the Negro Workman." The authors think that John Henry, "mos' fore-handed steel drivin' man in the world," was "probably a mythical character." Nine major variants of the song and four minor ones are given as typical of the great hero of "hundreds of thousands of black toilers."

The prose epic of John Henry related in the volume is certainly not less interesting than the songs about him and is no mean rival to the tale of Paul Bunyan himself, as the following bit will testify:

One day John Henry lef' rock quarry on way to camp an' had to go through woods an' fiel'. Well, he met big black bear an' didn't do nothin' but shoot 'im wid his bow an' arrer, an' arrer went clean through bear an' stuck in big tree on other side. So John Henry pull arrer out of tree an' pull so hard he falls back 'gainst 'nother tree which is full of flitterjacks, an' first tree is full o' honey, an' in pullin' arrer out o' one he shaken down honey, an' in fallin' 'gainst other he shaken down flitterjacks. Well, John Henry set there an' et honey an' flitterjacks an' set there an' et honey an' flitterjacks, an' after while when he went to git up to go, button pop off'n his pants an' kill a rabbit mo' 'n hundred ya'ds on other side o' de tree. An' so up jumped brown baked pig wid sack o' biscuits on his back, an' John Henry et him too.

Fourteen typical Negro tunes given in the book

and an illuminating chapter on Phono-Photographic Records, presenting eleven graphs with explanations, greatly enhance its value. An excellent bibliography and an adequate index complete the volume.



"Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro" belongs to the type that first appears as a doctor's dissertation and later eventuates into a book. Worked out under the auspices of Yale University it bears the marks of careful scholarship that one expects to see in a doctor's thesis from that institution. All the apparatus so dear to the scholar's heart is to be found here: the detailed table of contents giving a bird's-eye-view of each chapter; the profusion of footnotes; seventeen pages of references cited; an alphabetical list of four hundred and seven informants with their addresses and the names of the institutions to which many of them belong; and forty pages of index. These help make it possible to find anything in the volume with a minimum of time and effort. The student is impressed with the thoroughness and accuracy of the treatment, with no sense of pedantry, while the easy style and the all-pervasive human interest should make it a fascinating book for the general reader.

In the chapter on "Practical and Emotional Background" the author traces the "mental heirlooms" of the black race of the Old South in part back to the dark continent whence it came, but also discovers that

choice items of folk-lore were handed down from the white master to the better class of slaves with whom he had more friendly contact. These European beliefs were later forgotten by the white man and relegated by the more advanced Negro to the garret of mental life; but in the more illiterate Negro sections, and especially in the rural sections—the very woodshed of Negro life—may be found many fragments of European thought. Mutilated and half-forgotten, smeared with the veneer of culture, and hammered together with items of "book-larnin," health-propaganda, Scripture, and what-not, this miscellany nevertheless shows the Negro to be, at least in part, the custodian of former beliefs of the white.

The author aptly observes that this European lore had a greater chance of perpetuation than the purely African lore. The latter would be likely to die out "since its devotees in America were too few in number and too scattered to provide the constant repetition necessary for remembrance."

Mr. Puckett finds that of the broad African traits, laziness, humor, and sexuality are most prominent. Of the first he observes that "the slavery-time environment of the Negro was not calculated to leave a traditional background making for habits of energy and foresight." He sees in the Negro's lively sense of humor a "survival-value in that it prevents pining away under adversity" and cites as a "splendid illustration of balsamic utility" the following:

White folks lib in a fine brick house,  
Lawd, de yalluh gal do's de same;  
De ole nigger lib in Columbus jail,  
But hit's a brick house jes' de same.

A well-regulated sex life he judges to be in part a "result of cultural background" and the sexual indulgences of the Negro "may conceivably be a racial characteristic developed by natural selection in West Africa as a result of the frightful mortality."

Leaving to the philologist a first-hand perusal of the discussion of True Linguistic survivals, embracing such terms as voodoo (or hoodoo), goober, pickaninny, Gullah, wangateur, hully-gully, and tote, the reviewer is tempted to cite for the delectation of the general reader a few such specimens of mutilated English as the "Christian and Develed Egg Society" (Christian Endeavor and Aid Society); "Dem curious Cadillacs (Catholics) what woan' eat no meat on Friday;" "De nineteen wile in his han'" (the anointing oil in his hand).

A marked bit of the Negro's practical and emotional background is his passion for joining lodges and societies. His grandiloquent speech is as useful in telling something about himself as it is in expressing his ideas. Consider the following from the standpoint of wishing to be impressive:

Underneath de ole foundations whar imputations rivals no gittin' along.

When Moses had grew to a manhood  
To a gypsum once he had slun.

The telling of animal tales is almost a passion with the African Negro, a passion that survives in

his Southern descendants. These stories had a far deeper purpose than merely furnishing entertainment. "Almost always the weaker animal by his superior wit wins out in the contest with more ferocious animals of superior strength. In a symbolic way this may have been originally a form of prayer or incantation whereby protection against these powerful denizens of the jungle was secured." A study of these pages furnishes a background for a larger understanding of "Uncle Remus." From a discussion of the origin and the world-wide parallels of the famous "Tar-Baby Story," the investigator leads on through erroneous nature-beliefs (such as that the hoop-snake can stand on the tip of its tail and whistle like a man, and that frogs eat buckshot and coals of fire), riddles, proverbs, games, African music, slave dancing, holy dances, and "jump-up-songs." We read that a Negro prayer is really a spontaneous song and that sorrow is expressed in the same fashion.

In the exposition of the practical and emotional background of the Negro, the chapter pushes on through Negro song structure, religious songs, rag-time and jazz, education by song, rhythmic lore, funeral fun, *et al*, until apparently every conceivable phase of the subject is exhausted.



Eighty-eight pages are given over to burial customs, ghosts, and witches, in which the reader is edified and entertained by such topics as stygian signposts, graveyard omen, dead detectives, ghost dodging, Negro haunts, cadaverous avengers, vampires, ghouls, spookey humor, and how to see ghosts, until one wonders along with the author as to whether the Negro has not a reality inherent in his make-up that the white man lacks.

The origin of the Voodoo Cult, its savage rites and outgrowths in various conjurations claims one-fourth of the volume. In addition to unquestionable testimony, the author writes with the certitude of personal observations. This is no doubt the most deep-seated and most terrifying of the beliefs that the Negro brought with him from Africa.

One phase of the Voodoo Cult is the worship of the python and thousands of these serpent worshipping tribes were sold as slaves into the Western world. Its chief priests were a king and a queen, into whose bodies the spirit of the python entered and spoke through them in a strange voice. In New Orleans "Li Grand Zombi" was the mysterious power that guarded and overshadowed the faithful *voodoo*. Through page after page of these nauseating and terrifying rites, the vivid portrayal holds the reader enrapt. The account of Marie Laveau (the last of the Voodoo queens), diabolical festivals, initiations, modern voodoo dances, the African witch doctor, the Southern hoodoo doctor, trick bags, conjure balls, images, reptiles in the body, hoodooing for science, and a score of other topics testify to the wide ramification of this cult and its fascinating interest.

Two chapters deal with positive and negative control signs, cures, and taboos. Prophetic signs and omens furnish material for another chapter, and the book closes with a discussion of Christianity and Superstition, a brief but vivid and powerful picture of the mingling of superstition and religion in the Negro soul.

"Folk-Beliefs of the Southern Negro" is an indispensable book to any one who hereafter shall plow in this field.

To ensure perfect collaboration between author and artist, G. K. Chesterton has done all the illustrations for Hilaire Belloc's new humorous novel, "The Emerald," in Mr. Belloc's presence.

## The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

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