

A Book of Challenges

MEN OF DESTINY. By WALTER LIPPMANN.
New York: The Macmillan Co. 1927. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

WALTER LIPPMANN'S "Men of Destiny" may well have been called "a book of challenges." In a day of change any challenge is important and in these days, institutions, ideals, reality itself—all are in a state of flux. A scientist in an apron standing over a test-tube in a laboratory cannot go on making important discoveries about the nature of the atom without finally affecting life as it is lived by the man in the street. And during the decade now approaching its close this man in an apron, before his test-tubes has probed into the atom so far that we know too much about it for the comfort of our old ideals of truth. We know that the atom is finally motion plus mystery. And the gentle Einstein has gone the other way out from the atom into illimitable space and into unthinkably vast distances, and has come back with the disconcerting information that things are not what they seem there; certainly not what they seemed to Sir Isaac Newton who with his contemporaries established laws which overthrew monarchies and paved the way for democracy. Einstein seems to have challenged our tight reality in illimitable space as the laboratory scientists have challenged reality at the infinitesimal apexes of the heart of things. That being so, inevitably men in institutions must change and mend their ways.

Walter Lippmann's book of challenges is not what its title would lead the unwarned reader to believe. It is not a series of character sketches of the men whose names appear in its table of contents, for instance,—Al Smith, Calvin Coolidge, Bryan, Mencken, Sinclair Lewis, Harding, McAdoo, Kellogg, and the rest. Herein one will find no irrelevant details about the externals of the personalities listed for discussion. Yet despite the fact that these sketches are not bristling with hen-minded details they are nevertheless largely interpretative of the men and their place in the American picture. For instance, and this is a notable if not the best instance, Mr. Lippmann discusses "Bryan and the dogma of majority rule." He pins his discussion to the Dayton anti-evolution trial as the episodic place of departure from which he discusses Bryan as an American statesman. There is precious little biographical material about Bryan in the essay, yet in the philosophical challenge of the dogma of majority rule Mr. Lippmann discusses all that is worth considering about William Jennings Bryan. One will not learn in this discussion that Mr. Bryan carried a palm-leaf fan, had a figure like an old-fashioned gin bottle, ate himself into an early grave, wore baggy trousers, and had big feet. Instead one will learn that in his career Bryan proceeded upon the theory that there was a divine sanction for the theory that fifty-one per cent of any group agreeing upon a proposition was speaking the voice of God. Bryan never questioned that theory. Mr. Lippmann not merely denies it and challenges it, he scoffs at it and disproves it. So must the world in the coming century reject the dogma which was the cornerstone upon which Bryan builded his life. In three sentences Mr. Lippmann disposes of the theory upon which the Fathers of the Republic built this democracy. "The spiritual doctrine that all men should stand at last equal before the throne of God meant to Bryan that all men are equally good biologists before the ballot box of Tennessee. That kind of democracy is evidently a gross materialization of an idea that in essence cannot be materialized. It is a confusing interchange of two worlds that are not interchangeable."

In his consideration of Mr. Henry L. Mencken Mr. Lippmann is as ruthless as he is with Mr. Bryan. Thus:

"What Mr. Mencken desires is in substance the distinction, the sense of honor, the chivalry, and the competence of ideal organizing combined with the liberty of ideal democracy. . . . The most difficulty in democratic society arises out of the increasing practice of liberty. Mr. Mencken is foremost among those who cry for more liberty and who use that liberty to destroy what is left of the older tradition. . . . I am amazed that he does not see how fundamentally the spiritual disorder he fights against

is the effect of that régime of liberty he fights for. . . . He claims too much when he says that he is engaged in a diagnosis of the democratic disease. He has merely described with great emphasis the awful pain it gives him."

"Men of Destiny" is no book to wrap up with a box of chocolates and take out to while away a dull evening with a palavering flapper. It is a serious book to be considered prayerfully by those who stand baffled before the problems of the modern world and our American section of it. Mr. Lippmann has contributed much to the discussion of modern politics. He has given his readers nothing better than "Men of Destiny." The jacket of the book declares that "the cartoons by Mr. Rollin Kirby lend force as well as charm to the volume." They do, and more. They add gay pictured persiflage to some otherwise disquieting conclusions. They make the reader grin 'mid the encircling gloom which is about the most salutary service a man can do to his fellows in these bewildering days.



Warrior Emperor

GENGHIS KHAN, THE EMPEROR OF ALL MEN. By HAROLD LAMB. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1927. \$3.50.

Reviewed by FREDERICK WELLS WILLIAMS
Yale University

MR. LAMB has done a service to his generation. He has brought to life in the pages of a thoroughly readable book the career of a warrior whose place in history has thus far been fixed for us by the hostile accounts of three great groups of enemies whom he overthrew—Chinese, Arabic-Persian, and European. All of these have their historians imbued with racial and religious prejudice, while the congeners of the great Mongol, being without a literature, have left only folk-tales about the world's most appalling catastrophe. The author appears to have covered the available material on his subject with proper consideration, though aware of sources yet to be uncovered, notable among which are some fifty thousand documents in the Vatican recently discovered that may possibly reveal matter of importance. There is also a translation by the late Professor Douglas of Yuan Dynasty histories which he has not used for data on the campaigns in China.

For his purpose, however, he is justified in presenting a clear account of the tragedy of the Mongol eruption of the thirteenth century rather than a scholarly dissection of all the source material thus far unearthed. In his treatment of Jenghiz's dreams and of his alleged interest in Christianity—a report attributed to the Nestorians—he is entirely sound; in identifying Toghrul the Wang Khan with Prester John of legend he seems to credit Marco Polo's gossip without heeding Yule's careful analysis of the tale in his "Cathay and the Way." It is a highly controversial point, but he might have been less fearless where the wisest fear to tread. The reproductions in the volume of Persian paintings and French engravings are picturesque but chiefly interesting as a proof that artists in Asia and Europe alike have ever relied upon imagination for their facts. If the necessary objective of history is to kindle imagination while preserving it from

the fanciful and unreal it seems a pity that a first-rate work like this should embody anything that may be subject to misinterpretation.

Jenghiz—a better spelling than the conventional form which the author adopts and quite as authoritative—was, as Curtin calls him, "perhaps the greatest character of history that has appeared in the world." In the West his name for three centuries was a bugaboo, for three more it became a by-word; but however we dislike him he deserves more attention than the light-hearted masters of the waves on the Mediterranean have ever given him. Powerful both of body and mind, with incredible will and utter singleness of purpose, he was a strange and terrible figure, great beyond all others yet with a greatness that was not good for the world we live in. In the world of Asia, however, he was understood. He destroyed, but the measure of his slaughters was not always accounted against him by those who survived and found opportunities to follow accustomed ways as best they could under his control, for that control was more efficient than any of his predecessors had established. By adjusting our point of view it is possible to mitigate some of the prejudices of our race and training and estimate the man as one belonging to another sphere where our ideas of altruism and mercy had never been evolved. The old-fashioned moral question as to his being a curse or a help to civilization need not concern us today. The consequences of his personal activities are less calculable than those of any warrior in recorded history, and for them there is no more praise or blame to his account than can be found in any barbarian assault. His was the law of the jungle. It is his transcendent ability as a leader that is spectacular—the fact that he was successful in whatever he undertook. But the significance of his career seems to lie not so much in the spearhead as in the potential that created and propelled the weapon. Jenghiz epitomized the genius of his people for leadership, for direct action. As Scythians, Huns, Tartars, and the rest they have frightened or overwhelmed civilized peoples since civilization began; after their conquests they have merged into the culture groups of their victims or have disappeared behind the great steppes to preserve their barbaric integrity. The outside world seems to have grown old to keep the stock young, to renew the secular process of impact, destruction, and absorption until equilibrium between culture and energy was restored. The procedure suggests earth-movements and the geologic history of our globe.

Upon the most notorious aspect of Jenghiz's repute, his ferocity, Mr. Lamb says almost nothing. He errs on the right side, for Western accounts dwell upon little else. After acknowledging that he was a brute and a barbarian we must face the question, why did he not meet the usual fate of the savage and his works? Was there plan or reason in his brutality? Other successful savages in the world's history have left no enduring kingdoms. He exterminated peoples and places—perhaps forty million human beings and a thousand towns—but he restored vitality to Asia and dynasties descended from his breed lasted for centuries. No record remains of his theory of conquest; we do not know if, like Caesar's, it was original and profound; we can only say that he emerged from the wilderness of Siberia to annihilate opposition and turn thriving countries into wastes. If we suppose from this that he was simply a type of primitive animal how can we account for his care in training sons and generals for completing his work? for employing skilled artisans snatched from massacres to build anew the culture of the East? for the art and excellence of that culture when it arose again in the capitals of his successors, Peking, Samarkand, Delhi, and Ispahan? Unless we accept the discarded doctrine of Divine interference in human affairs we shall have to see in Jenghiz himself an indomitable soul indeed, trained in hardships, inspired by a passion for power, untouched by spiritual hopes or fears, careless of opinion or tradition—embodiment of elemental forces belonging to race. And in these forces were some constituents of a renaissance which his nized and set in motion. With the barrier of Persian powers—P Seljuks, and the rest—that had from the Roman Empire a check in the advance of Islam after the paralysis of its cult ters in Middle Asia. For very slowly and irresolutely medievalism that prescribed tion for itself.

The Social Pyramid

SOCIAL MOBILITY. By PITIRIM SOROKIN.
New York: Harper & Bros. 1927. \$3.75.

Reviewed by ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON

IF the Russian Revolution had done nothing more than send to us Professor Sorokin of the University of Minnesota, we should owe it a large debt. It appears, to be sure, to have stamped him with an almost indelible tendency to deny that there is any such thing as progress—but in "Social Mobility" this is relieved by a spirit of vivacity and humor which causes him to interrupt a final prediction of dire, and speedy disaster for America by remarking that "the writer too much likes the mobile type of society to prophesy its funeral." This sentence illustrates not only Professor Sorokin's spirit, but his clear, rhythmic English with its frequent little departures from our exact idioms.

Most sociological writers speak as if every institution and individual were glued into place. Professor Sorokin goes to the opposite extreme, and devotes page after page to proving that everything is in a state of flux. Not only do nations rise and fall, but so do occupations, religious cults, social usages, and ideas. The wheelwright of a generation ago gives place to the chauffeur; the Shakers die out while the Christian Scientists increase; and long skirts are no longer the style. Individuals, likewise, continually rise or fall; the man who is poor today is rich tomorrow; the ruler of yesterday is now a music teacher. In our day and country this social mobility is greater than ever before. It is great horizontally because people, habits, institutions, and ideas hop all over the world without changing their social level; Professor Sorokin, for example, remains an inspiring leader wherever he migrates; the radio goes neither up nor down socially when transported from America to China. Vertical mobility is equally common; we all know families of *nouveau riche* and of decayed gentility; the habit of using napkins at the table has spread from the upper classes almost to the lowest; the bicycle is held in much less esteem in America since the automobile appeared, but in Holland and Japan it still seems to be near the top notch of favor in spite of Professor Sorokin's generalization to the contrary.

Everyone recognizes this mobility, but how many appreciate its significance? The social pyramid, to use Sorokin's favorite illustration, consists of a great series of horizontal layers; at the bottom stands a huge unskilled proletariat; above it a smaller number of skilled workers; then a still smaller group of middle class people; and at the top a few leaders. The differences between the upper and the lower classes are partly the result of environment and partly of heredity. Some people of high ability are born in the lower classes, but never get out of them, perhaps because they live in a very immobile civilization like that of India with its caste system. On the other hand, some who possess low ability are kept in the upper classes by the influence of their families. Nevertheless, on an average, the upper classes show many superior qualities due to inheritance—they are taller, heavier, and have larger heads than the lower classes. They tend to be more beautiful and to have fewer physical blemishes. They likewise have greater strength and endurance, qualities which perhaps rise highest in royal families where the strain of constant public appearances is tremendous. On the other hand, there is no permanent difference in the upper and lower classes on the basis of the complexion or the form of the head. Only in the prevalence of mental diseases does Sorokin find a serious inferiority among the upper classes.

All these things are set forth in such detail and with such countless references that the reader can draw conclusions for himself, regardless of those of the author. Nevertheless, the reader must walk for example, in discussing the superior size of the heads Sorokin does not indicate whether these pertain to actual size, or to size of the body. Again, he greatly weakens the force of his pages of his book by tiresomely repeating the word "trendless." With examples he demonstrates that fluctuations in social mobility refer especially to fluctuations in the form of the social pyramid, and that all sorts of pyramids, political, and the like. In some times he finds the pyramid

very flat, in others very tall and slender. Some countries have comparatively few occupations, a vast number of people being engaged in farming, a few in skilled labor and trade, and a handful in the professions. In such countries the pyramid has a broad base, but is very flat. In others, like the United States, a great variety of occupations is represented and the pyramid is tall. We likewise have a tall economic pyramid, because our middle classes still remain fairly numerous.

Now Sorokin is especially interested in the fact that sometimes tall pyramids like ours become flat. This happened in Russia during the Revolution, when the rich lost their property and all classes were reduced almost to a dead level. But such a condition cannot last, for certain elements of the population quickly acquire greater means than their fellows, and the pyramid grows taller.

It needs no demonstration to prove that fluctuations of this kind are the rule in almost every phase of human existence. Nevertheless, it is valuable to have the facts set down so fully and authoritatively as is done by Professor Sorokin. That, however, does not warrant the conclusion that all history is "trendless;" in fact the opposite is easily demonstrable. If there were no trend whatever, the revolutions of our day would reduce everyone to an economic, political, occupational, and social condition like that of the average man in the worst periods of early neolithic times when fire, clothing, and artificial shelter were unknown, when no tools except unshaped sticks and stones were in use, and when there were no such things as government, social classes, or diversity of occupations. No revolution during the Christian era has ever reduced the average person of any country to any such condition, or even to the corresponding condition in paleolithic or neolithic times, or in the bronze age; nor has the level of any machine-using country ever fallen to that of the lowest eras in the early ages of the use of iron. Moreover, since the introduction of machinery, it is very doubtful whether the most comfortable parts of the population in machine-using parts of the world have ever been reduced to any such economic level as prevailed among average people before the introduction of machinery, and it is not likely that this will ever happen. Similar reasoning shows that in every phase of human life there is a definite trend, so that Sorokin's reiteration of "trendless cycles," a "trendless history," and the "trendlessness" of human existence is not only tiresome but "fantastic," to use a word which he likes to apply to people who do not agree with him.

In spite of many debatable points like this, Sorokin is intensely interesting and stimulating, as appears in the novel and illuminating idea which he sets forth in his chapter on social testing. In order that people may remain in the upper social classes if born there, or climb thither if born elsewhere, they must pass three primary tests, or else display such rare ability that people overlook their defects in one or another of these tests. One test is the family; the man who wants high position is vastly more likely to get it if he belongs to a good family than to a poor one. Another is the school; uneducated people sometimes attain high position, but in general, high education and high position go together. A third is the church; for a position as a religious leader has always been a powerful factor in raising people's social status. Later in life such matters as economic and political ability play a large part, but we are now talking about the early stages of a career.

The interesting point made by Sorokin is that our present social difficulties are greatly augmented because the testing and sifting of aspirants for membership in the upper classes which formerly came through the family, the school, and the church, has been greatly weakened. People of poor family, for example, can easily get into our upper classes. This may be a good thing, but it distinctly lowers the cultural tone. Uneducated people still have difficulty in attaining high position, but almost everyone can get an education. Education, however, implies little or nothing except intellectual ability. Both culture and morals have almost ceased to be selective factors in admitting people to our educated classes, whereas formerly they played a dominant part. In similar fashion a religious background is not now deemed essential as a criterion for inclusion in the upper classes. All this means that our leaders are not subjected to anything like such stringent selection

for high moral and cultural qualities as in the old days. Social mobility is thus increased, but the stability of society is diminished.

Another of Sorokin's thought-provoking discussions concerns the length of life and future prospects of communities where social mobility is low compared with those where it is high. Suppose that mobility is low and it is difficult for strong characters to rise from the lower to the upper classes, while weak characters are kept in the upper classes. The lower classes will grow stronger and less submissive, and the upper classes will grow weaker and may decline in numbers as appears from a great many investigations. Such conditions create what Sorokin calls a vacuum at the top—which can be filled only by an upward movement from below. One of Sorokin's most important theses is that such movements are the main cause of revolutions. Can this be reconciled with the fact that in India, for example, where social mobility is at a minimum, social revolutions are almost unknown? Sorokin attempts this by a glorification of the eugenic system of the "stern" Brahmins, who appear to be the group of human beings whom he most admires.

Where social mobility is extremely high, as among us, it seems to Sorokin that civilization is bound to be short-lived. Not only do we weaken the lower classes by taking out the able young people, but we sterilize these young people by putting them in the upper classes. At the same time our highly mobile system causes the same person to live in many different places, engage in various occupations, change his associates time and again. All this breaks up the home, destroys community life; deadens the sense of loyalty to one's birthplace, city, and country. It likewise makes people lonely, for even though they become acquainted with far more people than did their ancestors, they do not have that intimate association with life-long friends which is one of the finest and most stabilizing of influences. Such conditions and many others lead to nervous restlessness, an eager search for pleasure, suicide, vice, and a host of other evils. They also provide such a wealth of experiences and such a host of new and opposed viewpoints that people distrust everything. That is why religion has been weakened and moral standards have declined. The final result is swift decay. Professor Sorokin's thesis seems to indicate that social immobility and mobility both lead to revolutions, the difference being that immobility keeps a culture firmly established for a long time and then leads to a sudden great revolution as in Russia, while mobility leads to rapid progress and then to rapid decay without any great paroxysm, as in Rome.

It is not easy to evaluate Professor Sorokin's book. His ideas are certainly of great importance, and demand most careful study. The most outstanding feature of the book is the way in which it raises far-reaching problems as in the following quotation:

Except during the period of decay, the upper classes are richer [than the lower], with strong, ambitious, able, and adventurous characters; with hard, severe, and non-sentimental natures; with insincere and cynical men. In the period of decay this difference disappears. The upper classes become soft, sincere, humanitarian, timid, and cowardly. Such aristocracy is easily put down and superseded by the newcomers of the usual type. . . . Perhaps it is very pitiful that the real situation is such, and yet it is such in spite of the virtuous theories of the humanitarians. . . . From this standpoint, the future of the present money aristocracy and intellectual and political aristocracy is likely not to be very bright. If [although] they are sufficiently sly, they are quite humanitarian and soft, and are permeated with the spirit of the injustice of their privileges and fortunes. Is it strange, therefore, that in Russia and Italy they have already been put down?

Napoleon, Alexander, Julius Caesar, and Machiavelli doubtless exemplify Sorokin's definition of the type that makes a strong upper class. But how about Confucius, Plato, Jesus, Galileo, Darwin, Livingstone, and Lincoln? Our Russian friend has thrown down many bones upon which there is much good picking.

Thirty-nine autographed letters written by Col. W. Dansey to his mother while on service in America between 1775 and 1783 were purchased at auction in London recently by Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach of Philadelphia for £850 (\$4,250). The lot included a flag of green silk with seven red and six white stripes, in a corner of which were the colors of the Delaware Militia. The flag was taken a few days before the Battle of Brandywine.