

last great Ottoman Sultan, one of those leaders of a steppe people, who marched into the vacuum left by the reckless destruction of the Byzantine Empire—we should know today that vacuums are dangerous—and set up their own empire based on some enlightenment and much strength.

We have long known what Suleiman looked like. Titian, at the whim of an Urbino duke, painted his portrait, and so we can see “his restless gray eyes, his thin lips, his narrow, beaked nose,” and his face, which “except for a slight mustache, was shaven”—all so ably described by Harold Lamb.

The man himself has been more elusive. Because of prejudice, because only recently have the Turks turned to scientific research, and because of distance and language Suleiman has been one of the least known of the giants of the sixteenth century, that age of giant men.

Not the first—for we have Professor Merriman’s solid book of 1944—but certainly the most eloquent, Harold Lamb sets out to correct this situation. He does so in a biography that is outstanding even for a man who has already distinguished himself with his fine writing, including “Genghis Khan” and “The March of the Barbarians” and “The Crusades.” It is at once good reading and important history. It is at the same time a vivid portrayal of a complicated human being and a lucid presentation of the Turkish way of life.

Naturally, Mr. Lamb’s first concern is with Suleiman himself, and he here shows his great skill by the balance of his treatment. For he has something

of a problem on his hands. Suleiman was clearly enlightened, he was clearly not a replica of his father, Selim, who lives up to all of our standard specifications for the cruel and the terrible Turk. Yet Suleiman had his two ablest sons executed and did so as a consequence of harem intrigue. And with his own hands he garroted Ibrahim the Vizier when that Greek acted the way he might have been expected to act after Suleiman had unwisely given him almost unlimited power.

Yet Mr. Lamb is equally effective when he deals with the men and the women around Suleiman. I confess to bias, liking the sea, but I cannot imagine a more effective portrait than the one of that incorrigible old sinner and seadog Kair-ad-Din (Barbarossa), who established Moslem seapower west of Sicily and who still at sixty had a wife in every port. Here is no corsair but a great admiral, to be placed beside Nelson and Nimitz. Well done, too, are Roxelana, the concubine who became queen, the various viziers, and Suleiman’s repulsive son and successor, Selim the Sot.

Mr. Lamb relies very greatly upon the methods of fiction and writes from a generally Turkish point of view. He even revises Lepanto and the Siege of Vienna. But in spite of this—or perhaps because of it—his is that most desirable of achievements—a volume that you will both want to and should read.

*Thomas Caldecot Chubb is the author of “The Life of Giovanni Boccaccio,” “Aretino: Scourge of Princes,” and “The Letters of Aretino.”*

## Annals of Head & Heart

A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE. By R. J. Mitchell and M. D. R. Leys. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 612 pp. \$6.

By CRANE BRINTON

SUBTITLES, though often inconvenient and even inelegant, have their uses. A “History of the English People” suggests the famous history of that name by J. R. Green, which is an excellent survey of what we commonly think of as history. But Messrs. Mitchell and Leys are in no sense writing this sort of history; at the very least they owe us a subtitle, “A Social History.” For they are concerned above all with the private, domestic lives of English men and women of all classes from prehistoric days to the present, with what they wore, what they ate, how they amused themselves, where they lived. They are not directly concerned with the economics of how people made a living; they pay rather more, but by no means central, attention to what people carried in their heads and hearts, to the sort of social history that borders on intellectual history.

Within their own self-imposed limits they do an admirable job. This sort of history cannot by the very nature of its materials have the flow and the drama of narrative history or grand generalizations in the manner of Buckle or Toynbee. The content has to be scrappy, a bit like a collection of odds and ends used to fill in awkwardly empty places in newspapers. But it is a fascinating collection of odds and ends, of “facts” in all their satisfying concreteness. Many a reader who has worked too hard to understand man’s fate will find relief in these quiet and unpretentious but always professionally competent pages.

Again within their own limits the authors have made a kind of encyclopedic treatment. One can follow sports from the medieval tournaments right down to the modern mass-sports. (England, of course, began it all, however far we Americans may have outstripped her in mere quantity: as early as 1901 the British achieved a crowd of 110,000 at a football Cup Final, and as early as 1904 Middlesbrough paid Sunderland £1,000 for one of their football players.) One can follow cookery, costume, medicine, and many other forms of human activity. One can learn, alas, that the Pilgrim’s Road is just another modern invention and that actually Chaucer’s and all other pilgrims took the shortest and most efficient road; or one can learn that Princess Mary—not yet Bloody Mary—“fared well in 1544,

## Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

### QUOTATIONS IN THE HUMOROUS VEIN

Wendell Smith, of Morristown, New Jersey, submits twelve quotations and asks you to name the person quoted. Five correct is par, six is very good, and seven or better is excellent. Answers on page 14.

1. Authors have established it as a kind of rule that a man ought to be dull sometimes.
2. I have been an author for twenty-two years and an ass for fifty-five.
3. No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money.
4. George Moore wrote brilliant English until he discovered grammar.
5. Obscenity can be found in every book except the telephone directory.
6. An artist should be fit for the best society and keep out of it.
7. He writes indexes to perfection.
8. He writes his plays for the ages—the ages between five and twelve.
9. Only a mediocre writer is always at his best.
10. It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn’t give it up because by that time I was too famous.
11. A learned fool is one who has read everything and simply remembered it.
12. Art is a collaboration between God and the artist, and the less the artist does the better.

when among her Christmas gifts were enough pieces of fancywork to stock a stall at a bazaar."

Obviously no reviewer can do more than give a rough indication of the contents of a book like this. Yet the willing reader may perhaps draw a few conclusions of his own even from this kind of social history. Mary's glut of useless Christmas gifts sounds very familiar. Indeed, at this level of history one is struck with peculiar force by the kind of persistence that customs, habits, little ways of doing and even believing possess. No accurate measure can tell us just how life differed for John Jones in England in 1450, in 1750, in 1950. Certainly much was very different in each of these periods. The leper we no longer know at all today. Bearbaiting is not practised even in secret, as cockfighting undoubtedly is. There are no highwaymen left, and there is for the first time in some thousand years an admirable police force. And yet the human likenesses are infinite. We find, for instance, that the self-made man, the newly-rich, is always with us. Piers Plowman could complain that "Soap sellers and their sons for silver are made knights." We find that the Victorian idea of women was indeed but briefly held and for but one class; mostly English women have worked and lived in a world quite as rough as that of their men. Above all, so little in our culture wholly dies; we find luck in horseshoes because our Iron Age forebears drew on the chalk of the Berkshire downs the corn goddess Cerdwen, symbolized as a horse.

## Why and How the Mighty Fall

THE MULTINATIONAL EMPIRE. By Robert A. Kann. New York: Columbia University Press. Vol. I, 444 pp. Vol. II, 423 pp. \$12.50.

By ROBERT J. KERNER

THE HAPSBURG Empire vanished at the end of the First World War. Among those who lamented its passing with regret, and even among those who felt jubilation at its downfall, the questions were often asked: "Why?" "Could it have been preserved?" "What can we learn from such an event?" "How can the empires of today avoid a similar fate?"

The utterances of statesmen and the writings of scholars from 1918 to the present time, bemoaning its demise, indicate only too well that there is need of study and reflection on the history of Austria-Hungary, that its mistakes may be avoided. These speakers and writers include some of the most prominent statesmen of our time in the East and West, as well as some of the leading historians and social scientists who pretend to deal with similar problems. They would soon realize how superficially they have considered such matters if they took time out to study in the great and only laboratory for them—history.

Robert A. Kann in this volume has undoubtedly written the outstanding work on this complicated subject. The questions that have been asked come up again and again and receive ra-

tional and judicious answers. "Austria's fall only proves that the destruction of the unreformed empire was inevitable." "An attempt has been made in this study to prove that in the course of two generations until 1918 there never appeared an equally promising opportunity [as in 1848-1849] for the empire to carry out reforms without risking its disintegration." "Could Austria have been preserved, and, if so, at what price? What kind of far-reaching reforms leading to federalism or national autonomy would have secured her continued existence? Judging from a twentieth-century standpoint the answer is amazingly simple: none. One thing and one thing alone in all probability could have saved Austria for some time to come: peace."

The unreformed empire, based on the compromise of 1867 between Germans and Magyars as the master nations, had to go and no reforms could have saved it. Peace might have prolonged its life only "for some time." Such is the result of this painstaking study, and these were essentially the conclusions reached by the reviewer in his work for the Colonel House Inquiry and the American Peace Commission (1917-1919), at that time regarded by Western political and intellectual leaders as biased and unfounded, today established facts.

The tangled skein of history and tradition, of races and nations, and of classes and religions that was Austria-Hungary is no happy hunting ground for those who would jump to conclusions without wading through the enormous literature of the subject, even if, as the present author did, one used primarily the materials in the German language. Competent scholars could point out that the literature in the Czech and other Slavic languages, as well as in Magyar, Rumanian, and Italian is lacking, except as it has been translated into German or a Western language.

But they could not point out that the author had not considered the essentials of the attitudes and points of view of the statesmen and scholars of the numerous nationalities of the empire. There are times when he might have used the materials in the eight or nine other languages, if he could read them, to better advantage, but not to change his fundamental conclusions. To the reviewer these are definitely sound.

Robert J. Kerner, who is Sather Professor of History at the University of California, is the author of a dozen volumes on Slavic Europe.



—From "A History of the English People."

"Swimming a Witch"—ability to float proved involvement with the Devil.