

## Resurgent Continent

**"The Struggle for Asia," by Sir Francis Low (Frederick A. Praeger. 239 pp. \$3.50), is a survey of a continent coming again to the forefront of history, written by a Scot who served many years as a journalist in India. Kenneth Scott Latourette, author of "A Short History of the Far East" and other books, reviews it here.**

By Kenneth Scott Latourette

IF THE hypothetical general reader, non-expert on Asia, has time for only one book on current conditions in that continent, that book is Sir Francis Low's "The Struggle for Asia." The author, a canny Scot, served many years as a newspaperman and editor in India. He has kept abreast with events in that country and in the other Asian lands. He is critical of Communism. But he is singularly objective and is as dispassionate and impartial in his reporting and appraisals as it is given fallible mortals to be. The book was written primarily for the British public, but is not so slanted that Americans will find it alien to their concerns.

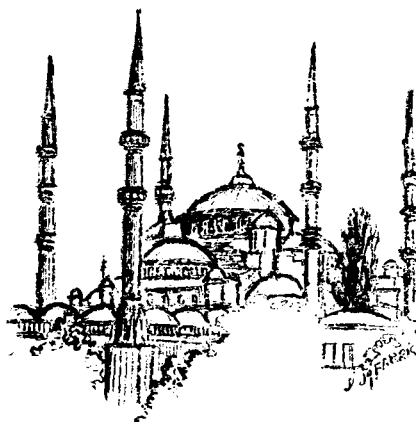
Sir Francis begins by reminding us that we are watching the resurgence of Asia. That continent is the home from which issued all the high religions of mankind. From it invasion after invasion swept into Europe and more than once threatened to overwhelm all that peninsula of Eurasia. The European mastery of Asia was only a passing phase of a long history. The successful emergence from Occidental rule, so he believes, has left the leaders more continentally conscious than at any time in history: they are aware of being Asiatics rather than simply Indians, Chinese, or Burmese. Asia's torment of mind is now its undernourished millions. It is among them in the rural areas that Communism has its most fruitful field.

Beginning with the western fringe, the author moves eastward, giving a region-by-region and country-by-country picture of the recent and current situation. He sees the Middle East menaced by Communist Russia as it once was by Tsarist Russia. Having lost most of their possessions in Asia the British can no longer counter the Russian threat. The Union of India Sir Francis regards as the chief testing ground for democracy in Asia. While he believes that India has done more to meet the problem of poverty than any free country in Asia, he holds

that Communism is still a potential menace to that land. In Burma a national government is, he is convinced, steadily growing in strength. He views what he calls the democratic bloc—Pakistan, India, Burma, and Ceylon—as a tribute to British rule. It was the British who prepared them for independence and who gave them most of such unity as they possess. He is not hopeful for Indonesia or Indochina.

He declares that the real struggle is not Asian nationalism against the West, but between Asian nationalism and Communism. He analyzes the reasons for the Communist triumph in China and finds them in the failure of the Kuomintang to keep in touch with the masses. He notes the close tie of Communist China with Russia and takes a grave view of the Communist threat to Southeast Asia. He has a good deal to say of the relations of India with Communist China and regards Nehru as not pro-Communist but as passionately convinced that India must be the center of a peace area.

This brief summary can only hint at the rich content of the book's crowded pages. Here in condensed but readable form is the information which most of us crave who would understand what is taking place in Asia. As is to be expected, the author is at his best on India. His touch is less sure as he moves from South into East Asia. For example, it is at least debatable that, as he says, Sun Yat-sen's death was a severe blow to the Kuomintang. Some observers would be inclined to say that the Kuomintang profited by it. Sir Francis has not probed deeply into the causes of the triumph of Communism in China. Nor does his brief chapter on Japan go profoundly into the problem of that country. The section on the Philippines, although declaring that that country is making headway, is thin. Yet in the main the author's judgments are sound and his statements of fact dependable.



## Between East and West

**"A History of Turkey: From Empire to Republic," by M. Philips Price (Macmillan. 224 pp. \$4.50), is a history of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, reviewed here by Emil Lengyel, author of "Turkey" and "World Without End."**

By Emil Lengyel

AS A distinguished newspaper correspondent in the service of the *Manchester Guardian*, Morgan Philips Price first made his mark more than a generation ago, following the Russian armies into Turkey during World War I. The current British "Who's Who" describes him as a Labor Member of Parliament, and library entries credit him with over a score of volumes about the Middle East, Russia, and other subjects.

In this new book, "A History of Turkey," Mr. Price tackles the massive record of that land from the Central Asian steppes to NATO. He begins by showing how the nomads burst into the West, filling the vacuum left by the decline of Byzantium. Then he shows them pushing further westward until the very pillars of Europe shook. Their success was monumental but turned out to be temporary, since their original success may have been largely due to the nomads' ability to treat their subject people as "rayah," cattle, as Professor Toynbee thinks. The Turkish Empire was doomed when the "cattle" began to rise in revolt. Until the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire it was sustained by some of the Great Powers as the "rope sustains the hanged man." These powers were apprehensive about the world coming to blows over the dead man's estate.

Next Mr. Price comes to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. The best parts of the Empire, including the coasts, were carved off, and Turkey was allowed to retain only the Anatolian high plateau. Before long Mustafa Kemal appeared on the scene, staging the most massive revolution the region has seen. An Oriental theocratic despotism was turned into an Occidental secular regime; Kemal became the model of Middle Eastern renaissance.

The Soviets, as Mr. Price shows, helped to salvage Turkey from near-extinction, providing it with arms and ammunition, thus enabling it to free its vital coastal space. At the time the thought of Turkey being at the Straits

appeared less menacing to the Kremlin than of Britain at the Straits. The Soviets did not foresee that in time not only Britain but also the United States would be established at the Straits through NATO.

Mr. Price quite rightly makes the point that the Middle East and much of Southern Asia have now become a power vacuum adjacent to the dynamic Communist "heartland." He sees the problem of the West to be that of organizing politically the countries that comprise that vacuum and of developing them economically. In this task, he says, "one naturally turns to a country which has had a long history of resistance to Russian expansion from the north, namely Turkey." He does not, however, specify how this should be done. A part of Mr. Price's book is devoted to a description of modern Turkey, its constitutional system, its foreign policy, its economic life, its schools, and its creed. He makes an attempt to give a picture of Turkish village types and their ways of life.

**I**T WAS Mr. Price's intention that this book should be a compendium of Turkish history. This reviewer thinks that he has not succeeded too well, perhaps because that history is too vast for a volume so slender. Nor is Mr. Price's knowledge of Turkish—which he describes as the "carpet-bazaar variety"—adequate for his task. He mangles even such household names as that of Ziya Gökalp, intellectual father of the Republic. Some of Mr. Price's geography and dates are topsy-turvy, i.e., when he places what he calls "Truman Declaration" in 1946, instead of 1947, and describes Bosnia-Herzegovina as "Macedonian."

Nor is Mr. Price sufficiently critical in appraising current events. He takes scant notice of the high-handed methods of the party presently ruling Turkey and of the blight it seems to have placed on what had been a reasonably equalitarian economic system. He appears to think that the Balkan alliance of Turkey with Greece and Yugoslavia is still operative. Evidently he has not taken a close look at Turkey outside of the cities or else he could not have written that "the Turks are the only reliable bulwark in the Middle East of the Western way of life." The Turks may have started on the Western way, but they still have a long distance to go. Deeply imbedded traditions cannot be excised in a matter of short years. In his search for the West in the East Mr. Price may one day find it instructive to pay a visit to another Near Eastern country, Israel.

## AMERICANA

# The Flowering of New York

**"The Raven and the Whale: The War of Words and Wits in the Era of Poe and Melville," by Perry Miller** (Harcourt, Brace. 370 pp. \$6.75), is a study of Evert Duyckinck's critical circle and its friends and enemies. The reviewer is Professor Gay Wilson Allen of New York University, author of a recent biography of Walt Whitman, "The Solitary Singer."

By Gay Wilson Allen

**D**ESPITE the catchy title "The Raven and the Whale" is not primarily about either Melville or "Moby-Dick," and even less about Poe's synthetic bird. In the words of the author, "It is preoccupied with Melville's America (in several respects the America with which we have still to deal), but the irony of the story, for him and for us, is that his America consisted almost entirely of the city of New York."

The exact years of Miller's study, as he outlines them in a chronological table at the end of the book, is from 1833, the founding of the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, through 1857, when Poe's arch-enemy, Rufus Griswold, died and Melville published his bitter satire, "The Confidence Man," which perhaps came as near as anything to characterizing the age. This period in spite of its shams and pretensions is one of the richest in the history of

American letters. But it has usually been associated with the cultural activities of Boston and Concord, especially since the publication of Van Wyck Brook's "The Flowering of New England." (His later "Times of Melville and Whitman" does not emphasize the New York scene.)

Although it is well known that Melville and Whitman were New Yorkers, and Poe, too, during the last years of his brief triumph and pathetic failures, it remained for a Harvard professor to discover the importance of the society in which these men lived and worked, a society which both nurtured and flawed their art. The social and intellectual background of Longfellow and Lowell, Emerson and Thoreau has been studied and discussed time and again, but even the numerous Melville biographers have inadequately treated the city of his nativity, and the Poe biographers have paid still less attention to New York in the 1840s. As Miller remarks in recalling Evert Duyckinck's complaint, "Had Gulian Verplanck, the editor of Shakespeare, lived in Boston he would have received such honors as were bestowed upon Jared Sparks or even upon Lowell; but New York was, and is, reckless about scholars."

Why this was, and is, true Miller demonstrates in his book, which is crammed with facts, personalities, accounts of petty feuds to illustrate the point. New York has always been a center of trade and commerce. In the 1830s the social and intellectual leaders were merchants, lawyers, and affluent physicians such as Dr. Samuel Wakefield Francis, who made \$15,000 a year, then regarded as phenomenal, and "paced literary New York in the sort of bawdiness Melville liked to hide in his books." This society was urbane, conservative, and mildly Epicurean. It was mostly Whig in politics, "high-church" Episcopalian in religion, and distrustful of "ideas," especially those of Germany and New England "transcendentalism." It supported the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, which upheld orthodoxy under the editorship of Lewis Gaylord Clark, denounced the immorality of French writers, and opposed the "barbarities" of Jacksonianism. At first Clark believed that the size of the country and the prodigality of nature would inevitably create a big literature, but



—Paul Koby.

Perry Miller—"compellingly pertinent."