

## BLACKFRIARS

relation with the power of the Universe, building temples in which the power is supposed to reside. Deistic societies were invariably found to be very energetic and expansive and productive, and at the same time the sexual regulations imposed were very strict, particularly in regard to pre-nuptial continence, much stricter than was found in societies at a lower stage. The thesis is indeed interesting but depends for its validity on the facts adduced in support thereof, criticism of which we must leave to expert anthropologists.

Mr. Unwin sharply criticizes some popular conceptions of animism and other anthropological theories derived originally from Tylor, which seem to him to be based on misinterpretation of native words.

If we may venture an opinion, it is that the thesis in spite of the evidence seems to be over simple as an explanation of cultural behaviour in general, though no doubt further investigation on the same lines will either confirm or weaken the argument.

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## SPAIN

The commentator on Hispanic affairs in this country has many difficulties to cope with, of which, perhaps, the most difficult is the relative, and in many cases complete, lack of familiarity with the events of Spanish history. Especially so is this the case when dealing with contemporary matters. Commentary on political controversies, a task arduous enough of itself when treating of the most kaleidoscopic country of Europe, is rendered doubly difficult when nothing can be taken for granted. To the average Englishman (read Catholic also!) Spanish historical personages, events and polemics of the present and last centuries mean little or nothing. However much one may deplore this lamentable ignorance it has to be accepted, nor does the present reviewer, little qualified for the task, propose to enquire into the causes underlying that ignorance, nor to comment upon the appalling travesty of truth that passes as history in the text-books of this country when Spain is the subject. The infamous *leyenda negra* with its accompanying stock-in-trade, the bloody inquisition, the horrors of misguided Hispanic colonization in the New World, religious fanaticism, clerical obscurantism, ignorance, bigotry, superstition, the barbarities of the bull-ring, the attractive dagger-in-the-garter señorita, the amorous guitar-playing and procrastinating Spaniard, etc., is rapidly losing ground in serious circles despite the strenuous efforts of Hollywood and of those benighted, phlegmatic Anglo-Saxons (mainly women) who after a hurried three months' conducted tour of the peninsular feel qualified to make pontifical pronouncements and unkind criticisms in so-called "travel books" for which the long suffering public has to

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pay the usual seven and sixpence. History on these lines however is now *démodé*, indeed the danger seems to be that the pendulum may swing too far in the opposite direction. Perhaps it will suffice to draw attention to the evil and trust the good-sense of the individual Catholic to winnow the chaff from the wheat. To those people, and they are many, who whilst confessing ignorance wish to take steps to remedy it, this review is directed. Short of a deep study of the subject (and who in these all-absorbing days can spare the time?) a judicious choice of suitable books may serve the purpose. One such for those who read Spanish is the recently published *HISTORIA DEL REINADO DE ALFONSO XIII*, by Melchor Fernandez Almagro (2nd edition, 1934; Montaner y Simón, Barcelona; 18 pesetas). Almagro, a well-known Spanish journalist on the staff of *El Sol*, has written an accurate and impartial account of the events of ex-King Alfonso's reign from his accession down to the exile in April, 1931. The book, admirably illustrated and documented, closes with the monarch's embarkation on the cruiser *Príncipe Alfonso* which was to take him to Marseilles. An evident desire for fairness and completeness leaves the author open to the charge of dullness, for his clearly printed pages crammed with information supply chapter and verse at every step, the consequent succession of speeches, proclamations, decrees, lists of ministries, etc., tending to be wearisome, but, as the preface states, in a country where political memoirs and documents from private archives so rarely reach print the historian is forced to rely mainly on the press and ephemeral political literature, in Spain both equally prolific and verbose. However, for all students of current Spanish affairs this concise, detailed and unbiassed account should prove indispensable. There is one serious lacuna: the almost total absence of economic and sociological factors, of paramount importance to-day when *la cuestión social* is in the forefront of all political programmes and is producing such intense propagandist activity among Catholics. The omission is fundamental and should be remedied if possible in future editions. The elimination of the economic background enables the author to concentrate on the political history, so the reader may expect but little help if he is seeking an explanation for social unrest in Spain or clues as to its origins in the past. Nor does the absence of an index facilitate the task of reference so essential in a work of these dimensions. Yet this history should go far towards supplying that necessary basis of knowledge mentioned above.

A second book, *SPAIN (The Modern States Series; Arrowsmith; 3/6)*, by Sir Charles Petrie, whose monthly commentary on European affairs in the *English Review* will be well known to readers, is a useful compendium which seeks to give "an accurate

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bird's eye-view'' of Spanish history with special emphasis on the more recent period and the events that have led up to it. Sir Charles Petrie by long residence in Spain, where for a time he was military attaché at the Embassy, possesses that knowledge of the language and insight into the national character which are, or should be, among the historian's main qualifications. He has previously written on the change of régime in Spain in his book on Monarchy, though the obvious *parti pris* militated against impartiality, and the same charge may be brought against the present volume. If one bears in mind the monarchical views and an obvious sympathy for authoritarian systems the needed corrective can be applied. The limited scope of the history demands concentration, the classical and mediæval periods leading to Spain's rise as a world power, her maintenance of that position for two centuries, are treated summarily but adequately in 42 pages, the rest of the book being given over to a description of the constitutional monarchy, the dictatorship, the second Republic and finally chapters on the Spanish genius and the economic situation, this last containing much useful statistical information. In handy format, with a short but useful bibliography (to which G. F. White's *A Century of Spain and Portugal, 1788-1898*—London, 1909—might well be added) and the indispensable index, this little book at a popular price should prove a serviceable introduction to those who do not read Spanish or to whom Almagro's more bulky history proves unpalatable. Space permits only a brief mention of still another short manual of Spanish history recently published by Methuen: SPAIN, A SHORT HISTORY (6/-), by W. A. Atkinson, Stevensonian professor of Spanish at the University of Glasgow. The author does not profess to be an historian but he accomplishes his object, namely a brief but comprehensive survey of the subject, with admirable lucidity and conciseness. No attempt has been made to give special prominence to any particular period at the expense of another as in Petrie's work, a proper balance being struck between ancient and modern. Incidentally the publisher's claim on the dust-cover that this is the only short one volume history of Spain published this century in England is more a pious hope than a fact, for, to name but a few, Sedgwick, Chapman, Bertrand have dealt with the subject. A pithy humour not usually associated with academic historians (a title Professor Atkinson would, I am sure, be the first to disclaim) adds a touch of zest to what is for the general reader perhaps the best of these three books.

RAMON SILVA.

## MEDIÆVAL STUDIES

Although the investigations of the last few years by Mandonnet, Grabmann and others, have thrown much light on the vexed