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He declared that the physical universe stretches as far as infinity and is eternal in its duration. And he even dimly guessed at Newton's great discovery. From this conception of the cosmos he was inevitably impelled to a new philosophy, and, indeed, to a new religion. The universe, which can neither increase nor decrease, whose constituent things change their aspects in ceaseless flux but are never extinguished, receives unity from a soul immanent in every wayside flower, in the most distant star, and in the heart of man. With this infinite and eternal spirit man is actually and veritably one. Why, then, whatever vicissitudes of change he may suffer, should he fear death? Unending progress is his only prospect. This was the philosophy that all the theologies of the time banned with equal disapprobation.

Bruno and his work are clearly revealed and described in this book. The importunate personality, the intrepid zeal for truth, the relentless reason, the synthetic thought, the soaring imagination, and the flamboyant eloquence—all these things have been understood with unerring instinct and unfolded with loving and intelligent explicatory labor. We have here the whole of the man and the thinker, a glint of each facet of his varied genius. All through his life Bruno burned with the fire of a wild spirit, and in his tragic death he burned in a flame that was not more ardent. But he had done his work. With his winged thought he had pierced the fixed firmament of the scholastic heavens. And he had helped to transpose religion from the perishing realm of creeds and dogmas into the undying domain of feeling and aspiration.

EDWARD MASLIN HULME.

*Akbar, the Great Mogul, 1542-1605.* By VINCENT A. SMITH, M.A., M.R.A.S. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1917. Pp. xv, 504. \$6.40.)

THE author of this book has had the good fortune to be the biographer of the most eminent rulers in India. In 1901 he published the life of Asoka; in 1904 the history of Alexander's campaign in India; and now he gives us his long-planned *Akbar*, happily delayed, for since Mr. Smith first spoke of the importance of such a work, twenty years ago, materials for Akbar's life have accumulated. A few years since appeared the memoirs of Manucci; in 1906 was found the long-lost manuscript of Father Monserrate, a Jesuit visitor at Akbar's court; besides which have been published a reliable edition of Jahangir's memoirs and other less weighty but still valuable authorities.

The prime source for Akbar's life and times will always be the court chronicle of Abu'l-Fazl, but that courtier's *Akbarnama* is always discreetly hazy when his master's character is affected. The records of less fulsome flatterers, foreign and native, are therefore indispensable both for this biography and for the *Ain-i-Akbari* or Institutes of Akbar, which the same courtier with the help of a staff of attendants compiled

under the emperor's supervision.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Smith has also drawn upon a store of archaeological facts hitherto not utilized.

To the meticulous historian the most valuable part of the present life will be the rectification of dates, to the general reader the estimate of Akbar's character and of the economic and religious reforms instituted by him.

Akbar, whom careless writers have called an Indian and even "an Indian of the Indians", was half Persian, quarter Turk, and quarter Mongolian.<sup>2</sup> He was born November 23, 1542 (officially registered as October 15).<sup>3</sup> His name, Jalalu'd-Din (Muhammed) Akbar, he afterwards utilized to his spiritual glory in such a way as to imply that he was divine, Akbar being the title of God. At the age of seven months, says Abu'l-Fazl, he revealed a "mystery of God's power" to his nurse. Other miracles also haloed the child, who in later years asserted that he "remembered perfectly" what took place when he was one year old. Oddly enough Mr. Smith accepts this as a fact and explains it as due to Akbar's "exceptionally powerful memory". But children often "remember" (from later years) what has been repeated to them since they could really remember.

Akbar was crowned ("enthroned") February 14, 1556 (another disputed date), at a time when war and famine had devastated the land and his adherents were few, a Hindu general and other rivals disputing his claim to the kingdom. Kabul was independent; Bengal had been so for two hundred years; the Rajasthan princes of the west held unchallenged possession of their lands; Malwa and Gujarat had long since defied Delhi.<sup>4</sup> To Akbar remained a little territory in the Punjab and a few adherents. The fourteen-year-old boy won his first battle, pressed on to Delhi, and after a brief period of boyish indifference awoke to the sense of power. Hitherto he had been under a Protector. This Bismarck he soon told to "make the pilgrimage to Mecca", and at the age of eighteen took the kingdom into his own hands. Like Alexander he delighted in feats of bravado, slaying a tigress with his own hand, racing a mad elephant over a bridge of boats, and even "fighting his sword", by running into its point, though he was probably drunk at the time, for, like all his family, he was apt to drink too much as well

<sup>1</sup> Akbar could neither read nor write but nothing escaped him in his court chronicles; in fact his life was revised by himself.

<sup>2</sup> He was descended from Tamerlane, but also from Chingiz Khan, on his father's side; his mother was a Persian. In ferocity a Turk, in physiognomy Mongolian, in education and culture a Persian, he was Indian only in accepting Hindu civilization and in recognizing Hindus as deserving of high office in the state.

<sup>3</sup> See on this point *Indian Antiquary*, November, 1915. Most authorities give the wrong date, following Abu'l-Fazl. Mr. Smith settles the point definitively.

<sup>4</sup> Akbar treated Agra rather than Delhi as his capital but Delhi generally represents the state. Fathpur Sikri, "Akbar's city", was built for a whim and abandoned for the same cause.

as to take opium. One of the boy-emperor's first appointments was that of a (heterodox) Shia to the office of chief justice, a significant appointment in that it foreshadowed his later repudiation of orthodox Muhammedanism.

Space forbids an extended survey of Akbar's exploits. Suffice to say that at the climax of his career (1581) he ruled all India (as far as he knew), to Ahmednagar, to Kabul, to the hither side of Baluchistan, and to the western sea. At this period he thought himself more than man and discarded one by one the religions he had previously affected, Zoroastrianism (1578), Christianity (1581), as well as the Hindu and Jain faiths. To each he had shown such favor that each regarded him as a convert, when he suddenly proclaimed his own religion, an eclectic monotheism tinctured with sun-worship, pantheism, and (Jain) antipathy to eating meat. The shibboleth of his own religion, *Allahu Akbar*, means either "God is great" or "Akbar is God", and the doubtful meaning represented the furtive ambition of the emperor who dared not openly proclaim himself divine.

To Akbar's credit he insisted that no Hindu woman should be forced to commit suttee. His economic reforms are accepted at their face value by modern Hindus who like to contrast his taxes with those of the English Raj. Mr. Smith thinks that the system of revenue adopted by Akbar was a grievous failure resulting in "shocking oppression". The empire was administered by officers directly responsible to Akbar instead of the Jagirdars of former emperors. This saved much "hand-greasing", but the peasants were still robbed and even sold for taxes. Akbar was the richest monarch in the world. At his death he left in hard cash a sum which Mr. Smith estimates as the equivalent of two hundred million pounds sterling. The peasants whose wealth made his were not treated too easily. He was always a Turk, vindictive, relentless to brave but conquered foes, an assassinator by proxy, fond of brutality; but very urbane and courteous even when most treacherous.

Mr. Smith, who hides no lights under a bushel, gives himself due credit for first proclaiming Jain influence upon Akbar and for discovering that the greatest poet of India flourished under this emperor. He also says (on slender authority) that Akbar was an epileptic as well as a mystic, who, like Muhammed, saw visions. We thank the author for the reference to the Jains; we doubt the imputation of epilepsy; and we regret that Sir George Grierson's opinion of the poet Tulsi Das should have been followed so uncritically. Three stanzas are cited to show that this poet did not write conventional verse. One of them is a well-known classic in modern dress! Tulsi Das wrote under Christian influence, but even were his ideas original he was certainly not "the most important figure in the whole of Indian literature". In short, we prefer Mr. Smith's judgment in chronology to his obiter dicta regarding matters not purely historical. Thus we follow him (and will not accept other accounts) in dating Akbar's death as occurring October 27, 1605,

and his son Daniyal's death in 1604 (repudiating 1605). This Daniyal, by the way, as an example of Mogul clemency raised the former assessment of Khandesh, when it was annexed, just fifty per cent.<sup>5</sup>

Those interested in prices and exact dates will find Mr. Smith's analyses and computations admirably lucid. Those who skip statistics will enjoy a well-written narrative giving a clearly defined authentic picture of one of the great lords of earth, once awful and always picturesque.

E. WASHBURN HOPKINS.

*The Beginnings of English Overseas Enterprise: a Prelude to the Empire.* By Sir C. P. LUCAS, K.C.B., K.C.M.G. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1917. Pp. 203. \$2.90.)

THERE has been much study and writing on special periods in the history of the English chartered commercial companies, but almost no attempt to give a continuous narrative of the whole career of any one of them. The work of Sir Charles Lucas, which endeavors to tell the story of three of the earliest companies, is therefore a welcome and important contribution to the literature of the subject. These three are the Merchants of the Staple, the Eastland Merchants, and the Merchant Adventurers. The first is perforce, for lack of materials, very brief, and the second a slight, almost an outline sketch; the work is therefore practically a history of the Merchant Adventurers of England from their obscure origin in the Netherlands in the fourteenth century to their dissolution, after at least four centuries of continuous existence, at Hamburg in 1808.

In this account there is much of interest concerning the affairs of the company itself, much concerning its relations to occurrences in general history. The author uses almost entirely printed sources, but among them are to be found a number of pamphlets and other materials not previously drawn upon for such uses. Although there seems little probability now that the actual records of the company will ever be discovered, there is doubtless much still in manuscript in England and abroad which will ultimately be made to throw light upon the many parts of this history which are still obscure. An actually definitive history of the Merchant Adventurers will obviously have to wait for the use of these. Sir Charles Lucas is familiar with two of Dr. Lingelbach's contributions to the subject; it is unfortunate that he does not seem to have known of his printed edition of the *Laws and Ordinances* and other documents of the Merchant Adventurers. The main document in this collection gives full insight into the organization and practice of the company at what was probably the period of its greatest extent and prosperity, the beginning of the seventeenth century.

<sup>5</sup> Prices have risen 600 per cent. in India since Akbar's day. At that time an Englishman could live there, travel, and return with "something saved", for "tuppence" a day.