

The proportions are admirable; this is perhaps the only study of Constantinople to give equal emphasis on both Byzantine and Ottoman monuments and history. The standard of factual accuracy is, of course, high, though there is an occasional exasperating slip as when the portrait of John II Comnenos in Hagia Sophia is described as that of Constantine Porphyrogenitos who reigned two centuries earlier. It is a pity that so much of the Byzantine history is derived from Gibbon and so much of the Ottoman from the improbable court gossip of foreign travellers. Yet this is a travel-book, not a history, and the cardinal misfortune was that Mr Liddell seems to have lived in Pera instead of across the Horn in Istanbul itself. No living writer could have conveyed so perfectly the quality of modern Turkish life if only he had mingled with it. So much that he has written of Istanbul seems truer of Pera and of Galata. His description of Constantinople conveys all its squalor, more than all its decay, but nothing of its personality, and very little of its beauty. But in its mastery of phrase it provides still further evidence that Robert Liddell is one of the most significant of modern prose-writers.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

THE PENGUIN ATLAS. Edited by J. S. Keates. (Penguin Books; 10s.)

This beautifully produced book has been issued 'to meet the needs of every reader who requires simple, legible maps at a convenient size'. It may satisfy readers who simply want to see where a place is, but will be of little use to students of geography. There are several atlases available, from Messrs Bartholomew, Philips, and the Oxford University Press, which give fuller and more valuable information in convenient shape, and at similar or only slightly greater cost. Nevertheless there is one feature of this atlas which will recommend it to many bookshelves, the fact that place-names within a country are spelt in the form which is official there, or in an accepted English transliteration. So we find Livorno and Firenze instead of Leghorn and Florence on the map of Italy. The index gives the more familiar form with its official equivalent and the necessary reference. But this only works one way; the official form is indexed without an English equivalent. For many readers this will raise complications. Unless their previous geographical knowledge is fairly good will they recognize Krung Thep, Rizhskiy Zaliv, Iskenderun, and Ostfriesische Inseln, as Bangkok, The Gulf of Riga, Alexandretta, and the East Frisian Islands? A useful list of geographical equivalents might be expanded by adding, for example, *selva*, *haf* and *wadi*, all of which appear in the atlas.

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