

the literature and of current biological research, the Caribbean and Malayan areas are stressed. At first only a local food for natives in various tropical areas, the green turtle in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries became a staple for slaves and the poorer freemen in some tropical colonies, and it was of great utility to privateers, pirates, and other non-Spanish mariners in giving variety to their diet and serving as an antiscorbutic. Although it appears that the history of commercial turtling began in the Bermudas, where a conservation law was passed as early as 1620, the Cayman Islanders and the inhabitants of the Miskito Coast ultimately played the major role in catching the green turtle. Introduced to the gourmets of London before 1753, through turtles brought from Ascension Island and elsewhere, by the nineteenth century green-turtle soup and turtle flesh had become prized foods of British epicures and aldermen. Today, it is estimated that the equivalent of 15,000 to 20,000 turtles a year enter the commercial markets of North America and Europe, and turtle meat (fresh, frozen, salted, dried, pickled, canned, and in extract) is widely available.

Parsons, among many other things, brings out some interesting ethnic differences in attitudes towards the green turtle. By-and-large, most Malays, Amerindians, Buddhists of southeast Asia, and Muslims of Indonesia eat turtle eggs but do not kill the turtle; and most Europeans, Chinese, Japanese, Australians, Melanesians, Polynesians, Filipinos, Hindus, and Africans will kill the turtle and will eat both the flesh and the eggs.

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BACKGROUND

The Castles and the Crown. Spain, 1451-1555. By TOWNSEND MILLER. New York, 1963. Coward-McCann, Inc. Illustrations. Charts. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 379. \$6.95.

This book, subtitled "a biography of the monarchs who shaped Spain's destiny," proposes to trace the careers of the Catholic Kings and their ill-starred heirs, Juana la Loca and Phillip the Handsome. In passing, it has a good deal to say about Charles V. The author traces with great evocative skill the dramatic highlights of the familiar story of Isabella's birth and youth and the disordered court of Enrique the Impotent, the delicate and crucial matrimonial negotia-

tions with Ferdinand, and their final fruition. Then, Isabelline government, Columbus, the Jews, church reform, and matrimonial politics receive due attention.

Next comes Juana's explosive and unsteady marriage with Phillip and the machinations of the Flemings against the Spanish connection amid the realization of Juana's growing neuroticism and the tragedies which made her heiress to the Spanish dominions.

Finally, Miller narrates the death of Isabella, the accession of Juana and Phillip, and the maneuvers of Phillip and Ferdinand to set her aside. The latter's eventual success brought the confinement of Tordesillas and the long descent into madness, relieved only by the furor of the Comunero revolt.

Throughout this narrative, the emphasis, according to the author's intent, is personal. There is little beyond court politics and less of dull administration or duller economics. In the process, the book acquires vivid narrative power, but its sharp focus on the throne and its occupants throws much of importance into shadow. Similarly, the focus is on Castile; little is said of Aragón and the Mediterranean embroglios of Ferdinand. Indeed, it is possible to say that Castile and the ladies are the author's favorites, since Ferdinand and Phillip and Charles come in for some rather harsh judgments.

Miller presents a sympathetic and penetrating treatment of Juana. He is much kinder to that unhappy lady than many of her biographers, and presents a strong case for the conclusion that she was neurotic but not insane till finally the betrayals of her father, her husband, and her son reduced her to madness. Yet, occasionally it seems that Ferdinand and Charles especially cannot be fairly condemned for being kings rather than psychiatrists.

In conclusion, then, this book is written with strong emphasis upon the personal lives of the Castilian monarchy. It has great power to evoke the sights and the very smells of Spain and presents a colorful, dramatic, and engrossing narrative. There is, on the other hand, little analysis or attempt to wrestle with the thorny problem of just how these monarchs shaped Spain's destiny.

There are an index and a bibliography but no footnotes.

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