

ryman screamed at him for abandoning poor Thomas, and then staggered out of the hospital."

The point is simple: Haffenden's dead subject has been killed off, or at the very least deprived of emotional and creative energy, even before the leap from the Washington Avenue Bridge. We are clearly more informed about Berryman's understanding in the Mariani version.

In *Dream Song*, Mariani describes how a poet in our time achieves a dimension sufficient to make poetry that will matter. This is done, he shows us, not by the poet's discarding or escaping from his own personality to assume the personality of a poet, but by accepting it. Berryman did not live a consoling life, but, being Berryman, he had no other alternative than to "go haltingly." Thus, the biographer who walks alongside should not be a transformer, fancifully making Berryman the man into a timeless, metaphysical grand master seated austere at his desk. Mariani affirms Berryman to have been one more perishable human being who encountered his perishability in poems. That seems in itself to be significant.

*Daniel James Sundahl teaches English at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan.*

M · O · V · I · N · G · ?



**LET US KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!**

To assure uninterrupted delivery of *Chronicles*, please notify us in advance. Send change of address on this form with the mailing label from your latest issue of *Chronicles* to: Subscription Department, *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, Illinois 61054.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## The Man Who Would Be King

by Gregory McNamee

Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton

by Edward Rice

New York: Scribner's;  
522 pp., \$35.00

He called himself an "amateur barbarian," but his comrades in arms called him "that devil Burton" or, more often, "the white nigger." None of the epithets mattered much to their subject, for Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890), junior officer in the Indian Army, had no time for petty indignations. He was too busy playing out the life of a hero in what Rudyard Kipling called "the Great Game," conquering the world on England's behalf. In doing so, he became an inspiration for generations of schoolboys who marched into the jungles and deserts and trenches in the service of the Empire.

Burton's shadowy life has long eluded biographers, although many have tried to capture the man in words. Fawn Brodie published a suitably swashbuckling account, *The Devil Drives*, in 1967, and it ranked for two decades as the best life of Burton generally available. In the intervening years, however, English and American readers have learned a great deal more about the effects of far-off adventures. They now have a superb retelling of his fascinating life in Edward Rice's book.

Burton, Edward Rice tells us, was far from a model youth. The son of an English officer billeted in France at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Burton grew up as a street gangster, bullying the locals with knife and sword, seemingly bound for an early grave. He was also uncommonly intelligent, able to master languages and sciences in a few weeks of study. His despairing father, able to foresee a brilliant future for his child if only he would settle down, sold off the family's possessions to buy Burton a commission in the Indian Army, paying £500—a sum approaching \$25,000 today.

Burton made his way to India and was promptly absorbed by the strange cultures he found there. Rather than observe them from afar, in the manner

of his fellow officers, Burton haunted the bazaars and ashrams, learning Hindustani, Sanskrit, Urdu, and a half-dozen other languages and dogging the masters of as many native religions for instruction. Within months he was inducted as a Hindu Brahmin, a member of India's highest caste; a Sufi master, the first Westerner to have penetrated that elegant and once-secret society; and a Shi'ite Muslim, a devotee of the doctrine of *taqiya*, or strategic dissimulation.

Burton saw no contradiction in honoring three separate religious traditions, adding them to the Kabbalism, alchemy, Rosicrucianism, and other Judeo-Christian mysticisms he had studied as a youth. What his fellow officers thought of the now-turbaned, darkly tanned, and long-bearded Burton we already know; he had "gone native" and was no longer part of the club.

But English practicality won out over English snobbery, and Burton was allowed to roam throughout India as he pleased, a full-fledged spy for the Empire.

Burton kept extensive notes on his linguistic and religious studies, but wrote very little about his period of espionage. One of the great contributions of Edward Rice's book is its reconstruction of the shadow years, during which Burton probably indulged in religious and political assassinations, calming himself with a steady diet of *cannabis* and opium. After months of drug-induced visions and secret travels, during which he coined the term "extrasensory perception," he had played India out. It was time to move on, weeks ahead of the bloody Sepoy Mutiny.

Burton proceeded to Arabia. Disguised as a Shia pilgrim, he smuggled himself into the holy city of Mecca and, apparently without regard for the grim consequences should he be caught, entered the Black Stone of the Qaaba, Islam's most sacred shrine. He then wandered to Europe, invaliding himself to the beaches of Normandy, where he captured the attention of a young Englishwoman, Isabel Arundell, a devout Catholic who would become his wife.

But Burton was not quite ready for domesticity. In 1857, in the company of Captain John Hanning Speke, he set

off to find the source of the Nile. (Burton's voyage is recounted in the recent film *The Mountains of the Moon*.) He came close, but battles with the African peoples he encountered—and roundly despised—and a growing rivalry with Speke botched his mission. Speke sagely named the headwaters Lake Victoria and took single credit for this heroic act of discovery.

Still Burton could not settle down. In 1860, intrigued by stories he had heard of a strange and faraway cult, Burton traveled by stagecoach across America to Salt Lake City, where he had an audience with Brigham Young, who had heard of Burton's wondrous adventures. (Burton wrote warmly of Young in his two-volume *City of the Saints*.) Rice's account of Burton's time in Utah and later San Francisco, which Burton did not like, is particularly revealing, for it shows a man now beginning to feel the wear of travel and the boredom of novelty.

He returned to Africa, posted as consul to Cape Verde, a place he hated more than any other he had seen. Without authorization, he skipped off to the mainland, paddling his way up and down the Congo and Niger rivers, mapping the inland waterways. He then accepted a posting to Brazil, where Isabel founded a Catholic girls' school and Burton, now thoroughly bored, fell into chronic drunkenness. He left the coast, blindly roamed the interior of South America from Tierra del Fuego to Ecuador, and summoned Isabel to abandon Brazil and join him in Damascus, where, now a worn-out old man, he enjoyed a spectacularly unsuccessful diplomatic career until being ordered to head the seldom-visited British consulate in Trieste, where he died.

In all of his travels, Burton found the time to write a staggering quantity of books—51 titles in all, most of them comprising more than one volume. Fluent in 29 languages, he translated many more books that are now regarded as classics of world literature: Camoen's *Lusiads*, the *Kama Sutra*, and the enchanting *Arabian Nights*, erotic passages and all. For his troubles, he was awarded another epithet, that of pornographer in an outraged but receptive Victorian England. Immediately after his death, Isabel Arundell stole away the tiniest bit of her husband's renown

for herself by burning hundreds of pages of his unpublished translations and original musings on sex, the one act for which she is now remembered.

Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton's fame as explorer, soldier, and man of letters will endure for as long as there are stories to tell and listeners to hear them. Perhaps the greatest of the many great English travelers, he shunned romanticism and sought to comprehend the new worlds he found. Edward Rice's biography is an outstanding introduction to the man and his work.

*Gregory McNamee's latest book is The Return of Richard Nixon and Other Essays, published last year by Harbinger House.*

## Bring Back the Iron Duke

by H.W. Crocker III

The Way of the WASP:  
How It Made America and  
How It Can Save It . . .

So to Speak  
by Richard Brookhiser  
New York: The Free Press;  
171 pp., \$19.95

The United States was founded by white Anglo-Saxon Protestants and became the political, economic, and military leader of the free world under their guidance. The conscience, industry, practicality, antisensualism,



## The Retreat From Marriage

Causes and Consequences

Edited by Bryce Christensen

A provocative investigation of the unprecedented drop in the marriage rate in recent decades, this timely volume brings together papers and commentary from a conference sponsored in May, 1989 by The Family Research Council and the Rockford Institute's Center on the Family in America. The third volume in the Rockford Institute's Family in America Research Series, this book features articles and analysis from more than a dozen prominent scholars including:

Herbert Smith  
University of Pennsylvania

Jacqueline Kasun  
Humboldt University

Jack Douglas  
University of California,  
San Diego

Justice Richard Neely  
West Virginia Supreme Court  
of Appeals

Norval Glenn  
University of Texas at Austin

Paul Vitz  
New York University

For your copy, send \$20.00 per paperback,  
\$37.25 cloth, plus \$2.00 postage  
and handling (add 50¢ for each additional copy) to:

**University Press of America**  
Customer Service  
4720 Boston Way  
Lanham, MD 20706