

• R E V I E W S •

Mr. Churchill's Second Volume

By FRANCIS NEILSON

FROM TIME TO TIME Mr. Churchill has laid down rules for the political critic to follow in searching out the inwardness of conflicting policies. The skill of the parliamentarian, in power and in opposition, is shown to the full in his speeches and writings. As a critic of political measures and procedures, his name has been coupled with that of Charles Fox—a very high tribute indeed. However, all through his adventurous career, he has often been prone to deny to his opponents the privileges of debate that he has arrogated to himself. This was noticeable in the years before World War I; and during the recent struggle, owing to the exigencies of the time, it was carried to excess when he mastered the dilemma that confronted him by calling for a vote of confidence or demanding a secret session.

It might be said by his friends that during such distressing circumstances as beset him after he became Prime Minister, any action would be justifiable. Nevertheless, in the debate on the Munich Agreement, in the House of Commons, October 5, 1938, he provided us with a rule of criticism that is worth considering at this stage:

. . . The Prime Minister [Neville Chamberlain] has himself throughout his conduct of these matters shown a robust indifference to cheers or boos and to the alternations of criticism or applause. If that be so, such qualities and elevation of mind should make it possible for the most severe expressions of honest opinion to be interchanged in this House without rupturing personal relations, and for all points of view to receive the fullest possible expression. Having thus fortified myself by the example of others, I will proceed to emulate them. I will, therefore, begin by saying the most unpopular and most unwelcome thing. I will begin by saying what everybody would like to ignore or forget but which must nevertheless be stated. . . .

It would be folly for us to ignore the advice contained in this statement, for Churchill is a servant of the British people, whether his position is that of a private member of Parliament or that of Prime Minister. He is responsible to them for all his political actions. His policies, speeches, and writings on the war are of public interest, and as a hired man (to take the phrase used by Lincoln to designate his official position), Churchill is accountable to his employers for his public acts. But this relationship does not stop there. We in the United States have our own interests to consider as an ally of his country. Indeed, it is asserted by many that our men

and money saved her from defeat. Hence, we have a direct interest in the politician who "aimed at" and "worked for" our participation in the conflict.

Therefore, his political writings concern our close association with our ally (during the period of the struggle, at least), and his story of his leadership is ours to consider as much as it is Great Britain's. It is indeed our duty to do so; and we should proceed to analyze, check, and criticize his statements as honest auditors who examine the accounts of a corporation are obliged to render correct statements to its shareholders.

I

WE NOW KNOW ENOUGH about the conflict to push our investigations of pertinent affairs of state and, at the same time, to question rigorously those opinions which threaten to subvert honest inquiry. Some students already complain that rumors in halls of learning allege that large sums of money are to be spent by well-known foundations upon a "special history of the war"—one devoted to "the Allied cause, specifically." It is hard to believe in gossip of this order, and harder still to think that qualified historians could lend themselves to such an outrageous undertaking.

Difficult as it is to get at the truth of anything in the world of politics, there should be no obstacle raised against the efforts of honorable investigators of the records, who desire to gather facts wherever they are likely to be found. This is not an easy task for any student. Think of all the documents buried or burned in the débris of European cities! Mr. Churchill himself witnessed the fire in the garden of the Quai d'Orsay, and Paul Baudouin, in his revealing Diary ("The Private Diaries of Paul Baudouin," trans. by Sir Charles Petrie, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948), describes that scene of the destruction of the Foreign Office files (p. 32). Why was this done? What was there to hide, and who would have us close our eyes to the importance of this act?

This is merely one of hundreds of questions that call for an answer. Think of the pledge given to Poland, and ask why two countries in no way prepared to support it should, by a false promise of aid, make a general war inevitable. Why did Chamberlain and Daladier consent to this policy? Paul Baudouin reports in his Diary that General Weygand said: "It was criminal in these circumstances to have declared war on September 3rd" (p. 46). Baudouin, who was Under-Secretary of State and Secretary of the War Cabinet in Prime Minister Reynaud's administration, gives us the distressing story of the months of May and June, 1940 in his book. He throws a cruel light upon the almost incredible misunder-

standings of the Allied governments and their generals. There are enough questions to be asked to keep the students very busy for a long time. Some of the most important awaiting answers are those which concern our participation in the conflict.

II

IF THERE BE AN INSTRUMENT which might pry open the door of the vault containing the Roosevelt archives, it is the story told in "Their Finest Hour" of how the "Former Naval Person" inveigled the President of the United States into committing this country to war. The letters of Churchill to Roosevelt are packed with every diplomatic artifice known to the chancelleries. They reveal a plot to entangle the President in the European strife, against the wishes of 80 per cent of his people; and the means by which Churchill succeeded in trapping Roosevelt leave him not a rag of respect.

Such may be the opinion of readers of this volume who do not know that the President was a willing tool from the first. He was not exactly the dupe Churchill would have us believe. Indeed, it would have detracted much from the glory the Former Naval Person allotted to himself if he had been obliged to publish all the letters he sent to the White House and the replies sent by Roosevelt to the Admiralty and to Downing Street. After Pearl Harbor, Churchill hailed our public declaration of war as a personal triumph, and in a speech broadcast on February 15, 1942, said: "This is what I have dreamed of, aimed at, worked for, and now it has come to pass."

Those who asked so often during the strife: "How did we get into this mess?" may perhaps find a reply to the question in the letters of the Former Naval Person. There is one, but it is not complete nor are all the letters published, for Churchill told us in his first volume there were "perhaps a thousand communications on each side, and lasting till his [Roosevelt's] death more than five years later" ("The Gathering Storm," p. 441).

In the second volume he is more explicit and says: "In all, I sent him nine hundred and fifty messages and received about eight hundred in reply" ("Their Finest Hour," p. 23).

It will surprise many of our politicians to learn that the President himself began this letter-writing business. In "The Gathering Storm" we read:

. . . What I want you and the Prime Minister to know is that I shall at all times welcome it, if you will keep me in touch personally with anything you want me to know about. You can always send sealed letters through your pouch or my pouch (p. 440).

This communication from Roosevelt to Churchill was dated September 11, 1939, only a few days after the war began, and yet, there is not another letter from Roosevelt nor one to him from Churchill in the first volume. Why not? It is difficult to account for the long silence.

Did the Tyler Kent scandal have anything to do with this matter of suppressing the secret correspondence that passed between the President and Churchill, while the latter was at the Admiralty? Many letters and cables must have been sent during the eight months that elapsed before the Former Naval Person became Prime Minister. Reviewing once again the précis of the Tyler Kent case, I find some evidence that throws a strange light upon this dark problem.

Tyler Kent, a clerk whose job at the American Embassy was that of decoding messages, was suspected of associating with a group of persons conducting pro-German activities. On May 8, 1940, an officer from Scotland Yard (police headquarters) reported the matter to the people at the embassy (one week before the date of Churchill's first letter published in Volume II, in which he notified Roosevelt he had changed his office). Kent was brought to trial August 8, and sentenced October 28 to seven years penal servitude for violating the British Official Secrets Act. In Mrs. Kent's petition to Congress of March 15, 1943, she presented a statement made by F. Graham Maw, her son's British attorney: "There were no grounds to prove he had communicated with the enemy so he was charged with stealing state documents. . . ."

The significant fact to be deduced from the précis is that the probable reason for Kent's arrest, trial, and sentence was that he had caught a British Cabinet minister in the act of communicating *secretly* with Roosevelt, the chief of a neutral power. It is, perhaps, merely a coincidence that some 600 British people were clapped into jail about that time, without charge or trial (just in the manner practiced by Hitler and Stalin). It is alleged that the exchange of cables began in October, 1939; and Churchill's first message, as decoded by Kent, was as follows: "I am half American and the natural person to work with you. It is evident we see eye to eye. Were I to become Prime Minister of Britain we could control the world."

After Churchill became Prime Minister on May 10, 1940, he tells us (in his second volume) that he signed himself Former Naval Person "to preserve the continuity of our correspondence" ("Their Finest Hour," p. 24). In this remarkable communication, dated May 15, 1940, he reports *secretly* to a neutral ruler upon his immediate needs.

He desires Roosevelt to proclaim non-belligerency. He requests the

loan of forty or fifty old destroyers and wants several hundred of the latest type of aircraft. He assures Roosevelt that Britain will go on paying dollars for as long as she can, but he would "like to feel reasonably sure that when we can pay no more, you will give us the stuff all the same" (pp. 24-5). Then he suggests the visit of a United States squadron to Irish ports because there have been reports of possible German parachute or air-borne descents in Ireland.

A rather large order to be filled by a peace-loving, neutral government, whose President was then earnestly assuring his subjects that he had not the slightest intention of sending American lads to fight in Europe! However, three days after the petition was dispatched, in the American Embassy pouch (?), a reply was received from Roosevelt "welcoming the continuance of our private correspondence," and a promise to "facilitate to the utmost the Allied Governments obtaining the latest types of United States aircraft, anti-aircraft equipment, ammunition, and steel" (p. 25). But the moment was not opportune to comply with the request for a loan (or gift) of forty or fifty destroyers.

It is sad to think of the credulous representatives of a democratic State, feeling secure in their halls of legislature, never dreaming at that hour of a skillful gentleman 3000 miles away, already busily at work on a scheme to embroil their people in foreign strife. How strange, after the deplorable experience of Woodrow Wilson, that secret diplomacy should again snare a guileless democracy and be responsible for sending its youth to the European shambles!

III

WE SHALL RETURN to the secret letters later on. Meanwhile, it is necessary to point out here that our historian's narrative of the battles that brought about the downfall of France must be read with strict caution. There are many books by British and French authors describing the events of May and June, 1940, which contain stories of the débâcle that differ, in some cases widely, from Churchill's account. Here are four the reader should study for a clearer knowledge of the catastrophe:

- (1) "The Role of General Weygand," by his son, Commandant J. Weygand (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948);
- (2) "The Private Diaries of Paul Baudouin" (*cit. supra*);
- (3) "The Second World War," by Major-General J. F. C. Fuller (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948); and
- (4) "The German Generals Talk," by Captain B. H. Liddell Hart (New York, Wm. Morrow & Co., 1948).

There is also an article in the monthly magazine, *Ecrits de Paris* (April, 1949, pp. 35-54), by Alfred Fabre-Luce (who wrote "The Limitations of Victory," a thorough analysis of the diplomatic blunders that led to World War I), which should be studied. It deals with some new matter that has not yet been touched upon by our critics. Fabre-Luce, reviewing Churchill's works, mentions the different versions that have appeared in America and in France. He says he is astonished to see the text vary from one country to another and even in the same country. This article treats with severity Mr. Churchill's account of many crises and events. The rebukes administered by this French critic are well merited. He says:

Pour ma part, ayant bien souvent constaté qu'un chef de gouvernement ne sait que vaguement ce qui se passe autour de lui, je n'ai pas été trop surpris de ces inexactitudes. Je dirai seulement qu'un homme d'Etat qui se fait historien devrait avoir un peu informé pour corriger ses épreuves—ou, s'il ne l'a pas, s'abstenir d'affirmer, comme le fait M. Churchill dans sa préface, que "toutes les précautions possibles ont été prises pour vérifier les faits" (p. 37).

Yes, when a statesman takes upon himself the role of a historian, he should have a secretary slightly informed to correct his proofs!

The above-mentioned books are totally devoid of emotional description. They deal with solid facts, and there is not a melodramatic sentence in one of them. The authors of these historical contributions leave to the reader the task of supplying adjectives that fit the statements, and the tints of a multi-colored palette are missing, for the facts are sufficient to reach the intelligence of the student although they are presented in unvarnished black and white.

The works provide many stunning surprises, and go far to dispel the silly nonsense served daily by the propagandists during the war. The blunders of the opposing governments and the efforts of their generals are exposed in simple prose. All the stupidities that brought nothing but anguish to many millions are revealed—all, from the pledge to Poland to the boarding of the "Altmark," to the formation of the Vichy régime, on to the crowning folly at Potsdam. The Norwegian fiasco, the Dunkirk disaster, the visits of Churchill to Paul Reynaud, the work of Laval, the escape of de Gaulle, the sinking of the French fleet at Oran, and many other momentous affairs are presented with the cold impartiality of a scientist discussing a problem in physics. This is as it should be, and now that the voice of the war broadcaster is stilled for a while, the student may not be rudely diverted from the task of ascertaining why and how it all happened.

IV

NOW WE SHALL TAKE UP the letters again. The mouse willing to be trapped needs no bait, but in this case the mouse was not a free agent. One restraining influence was the coming convention, at which a presidential candidate would be chosen, and the prospect of the election the following November. In spite of such weighty problems, Churchill urged Roosevelt to render help speedily, for he feared a change of administration in Great Britain might bring to power successors "who in utter despair and helplessness might well have to accommodate themselves to the German will" (p. 57).

In a cable dated June 11, 1940, Churchill informed Roosevelt that Britain intended "to have a strong army fighting in France for the campaign of 1941" (p. 132). He mentioned, too, that he had already cabled about the need of aeroplanes and flying-boats, but the need of destroyers was more urgent. In July he renewed his demand for destroyers, motor-boats and flying-boats, and acknowledged the receipt of rifles, cannon, and ammunition. It must not be inferred from his story of this traffic in contraband that he was not conscious of the fact that the office and duty of a neutral power had been declared in many time-honored documents. Indeed, he was a very severe critic of the slightest violation of neutrality when his opponents offended his sense of military rectitude. Still, he notified Roosevelt on August 15, 1940, that Britain had "a million men waiting for rifles," and that the details about naval and air bases on ninety-nine year leases could be adjusted (pp. 406-7). At the same time, he appreciated the peculiar position of the President who had "always to consider Congress and also the Navy authorities," but he realized that Roosevelt was "increasingly drawn to present the transaction to his fellow-countrymen as a highly advantageous bargain whereby immense securities were gained in these dangerous times by the United States in return for a few flotillas of obsolete destroyers" (p. 408).

However, difficulties arose about the transactions, and both Churchill and Roosevelt sought ways and means of resolving them. Sumner Welles told the British Ambassador, Lord Lothian, that "the constitutional position made it 'utterly impossible' for the President to send the destroyers as a spontaneous gift" (p. 410). A *quid pro quo* was necessary. Perhaps Roosevelt did not realize that the "safety and interest" of Americans were dear to Churchill, who suggested a way out of the dilemma:

If your law or your Admiral requires that any help you may choose to give us must be presented as a *quid pro quo*, I do not see why the British Government have to come into that at all. Could you not say that you did not feel able to accept this fine

offer which we make, unless the United States matched it in some way, and that therefore the Admiral would be able to link the one with the other? (p. 412).

On October 20, 1940, the Former Naval Person sent a dispatch to Roosevelt about "rumours from various sources that the Vichy Government are preparing their ships and colonial troops to aid the Germans against us" (p. 513). Of course, Churchill did not believe the rumors, but they were useful as an excuse for warning the French Ambassador and Vichy, and he was convinced America would show her displeasure at "a betrayal of the cause of democracy and freedom." In this dispatch, too, we learn that the fifty destroyers "are now coming along, and some will soon be in action."

Three days later the President gave a campaign address at Philadelphia, which dealt with the suspicions then rife:

I give to you and the people of this country this most solemn assurance: there is no secret treaty, no secret obligation, no secret commitment, no secret understanding in any shape or form, direct or indirect, with any other government, or any other nation in any part of the world, to involve—no such secrecy that might or could, in any shape, involve—this nation in any war or for any other purpose. Is that clear? (Oct. 23, 1940).

Modern Machiavellis suffer from a democratic complex when they are politicians of a peace-loving nation. It is rather a handicap for a statesman of our time to carry such responsibilities and be forced, because of parliamentary procedures, to revert to secret intrigues and backstairs methods of making deals their electors might not countenance. Yet, humanity being very dear to every one but a Nazi must be saved at all costs, no matter whether its position after it is saved is worse than it was, and nearly all the people of a continent suffer penury and its humiliations as a consequence.

On September 5, 1940, Churchill told the House of Commons:

The memorable transactions between Great Britain and the United States . . . have now been completed. . . . Only very ignorant persons would suggest that the transfer of American destroyers to the British flag constitutes the slightest violation of international law. . . . (p. 415).

Still disturbed, in October, about Roosevelt's difficulties "to say anything which would commit the United States to any hypothetical course of action in the Pacific," he asked if it were possible for "an American squadron, the bigger the better, to pay a friendly visit to Singapore?" (pp. 497-8).

As an official instructor of the technique to be used by the President of a neutral power to act covertly, to deceive his legislative bodies and sub-

jects, Churchill, in his letters, leaves little to the imagination. Indeed, they contain all that is necessary to enlighten our politicians on the devious methods practiced in secret diplomacy. But neither politician nor voter should dream of changing to frank and honest dealings under the system, for no matter what label is pasted on the form of political government, the same old iniquitous practices that have destroyed empires will persist.

If the beginning and end-all of bloody strife is only the defeat of the enemy, there will be no advance made toward a better state of affairs. History often shows that the victor is vanquished when the slaughter terminates, for the war-mind is utterly unsuited to the conditions of making peace. A statue of Nemesis, who divined defeat in victory, should be erected by the Allies in every legislative chamber. Paris, Vienna, Portsmouth, Versailles, and Potsdam mark the occasions when defeat came to conquerors, and a patched-up peace merely delayed the outbreak of another conflict. Of course, if a victor is satisfied to put up two fingers to signify the letter "V," then there is little more to be said about the real aim of war, which has never been reached in Europe.

V

IN THE FIRST VOLUME of his Memoirs, Churchill straightforwardly warned the reader that he did not "describe it as history" ("The Gathering Storm," preface, p. iv). The second volume will certainly not pass as history. Churchill's version of many important events will suffer much revision when the cold-blooded historians get to work. The "glorious" retreats from Norway, Belgium, France, and Dakar will be severely treated, now that other recorders who challenge Churchill's reports of them have come to the fore. There are already seven very different stories of these evacuations written by French, Belgian, American, and British authors, which are at variance with Churchill's account. No one blames the soldiers for the blunders of the British Government. But the ugly word "desertion" is not spared in Belgian and French books. Now that we have the letter, published in *The New York Times* of April 9, 1949, and the article in *Ecrits de Paris* (April, 1949, pp. 55-61) from Henri de Man, political adviser to King Leopold, it is difficult to understand why Churchill does not retract the statement he made about the surrender of the Belgian army:

. . . Suddenly, without prior consultation, with the least possible notice, without the advice of his Ministers and upon his own personal act, he sent a plenipotentiary to the German Command, surrendered his Army, and exposed our whole flank and means of retreat ("Their Finest Hour," p. 96).

M. de Man, who was with the King, says:

. . . This desperate position (of the Belgian army) was due, primarily, not to its own short-comings, but to the strategic movements of the French and British forces. King Leopold informed his Allies of the situation day by day, as it developed, including the decision to surrender (Letter in *The New York Times*, April 9, 1949).

M. de Man corroborates the statements made by some of our correspondents, the information given by Princess Filippa de Braganca in her letter to *The New York Times* of June, 1939 (quoted in Neilson, "The Tragedy of Europe," Appleton, Wis., C. C. Nelson Pub. Co., 1940, vol. I, p. 500), and the full account published by John Cudahy, American Ambassador to Belgium, in his book, "The Case for the King of the Belgians" (New York, 1940). The whole story was known to many Americans as early as November, 1940. It was then alleged that Churchill had the facts three days before the surrender, for Sir Roger Keyes telephoned to him on May 25 about the situation of the King and his army, informing him, also, that King Leopold had written a letter to King George in which he explained the cause of the disaster. We also knew that Ambassador Cudahy brought a letter to President Roosevelt from the Belgian King, in which full information was given of the British retreat and the hopeless condition of the Belgian forces. Paul Baudouin, in his Diary, presents a day-by-day version of what took place, and it is as distressing as it is humiliating.

The part Churchill essayed in the débâcle is one that will not escape searching criticism, when the skilled impartial historian examines it. He tells us, in "Their Finest Hour," that as early as May 19, the War Cabinet was informed that Lord Gort was "examining a possible withdrawal towards Dunkirk if that were forced upon him" (p. 58). Moreover, he points out that a conference was held at Dover, on May 20, to consider "the emergency evacuation across the Channel of very large forces" (p. 59).

Then we have the full account given by Admiral Keyes in his correspondence with Lord Gort. An article by Will Lissner upon this appeared in *The New York Times* of February 13, 1949 (p. 24), and an account with details of the disaster was given *in extenso* in a Belgian paper entitled *Un Document inédit et réparateur sur la Capitulation de l'Armée Belge en 1940* (published by S. A. d'Édition des Journaux du Patriote).

VI

IT IS TO BE HOPED that no sound political democrat will skip page 15 in "Their Finest Hour," or read it carelessly, for it presents in fine measure

the dominant characteristic of our author. In this frank declaration of desire for power, he fills in the sketch which Asquith drew of him when he was a member of the Cabinet before World War I. Lloyd George, in his "War Memoirs (1933)," has referred to Winston's "inflammable fancy," and Asquith, in "The Genesis of War (1923)," describes *l'enfant terrible*:

Nothing would do him but immediate mobilisation. . . . Winston who has got on all his war paint is longing for a sea fight in the early hours of the morning to result in the sinking of the *Goeben*.

A. J. Sylvester, who was Lloyd George's secretary for many years, describes, in "The Real Lloyd George" (London, Cassell, 1947), a conversation that took place in 1936 when his chief was von Ribbentrop's guest at dinner:

That night after dinner, Ribbentrop spoke about Winston Churchill. L. G. was, as ever, quite frank in his observations.

"He is a rhetorician and not an orator," was his comment. "Winston thinks more of how a phrase sounds than how it might influence or move a crowd."

"But he is a very clever politician," said Ribbentrop.

"Yes he is very clever," agreed L. G. "Very clever, but the question which confronts every Prime Minister is this, 'Is Winston more dangerous inside the Cabinet or is he more dangerous outside?'" (p. 207).

But the man who was intimate with Churchill and who painted the most discerning picture of him was "A Gentleman with a Duster" (F. S. Oliver), the author of that extraordinary biographical gallery called "The Mirrors of Downing Street" (New York and London, Putnam's, 1921). If there are critics who find it difficult to explain Mr. Churchill as he appears to us today, they should turn to Oliver's description of him as he was about thirty years ago. Oliver says:

From his youth up Mr. Churchill has loved with all his heart, with all his mind, with all his soul, and with all his strength, three things—war, politics, and himself. He loved war for its dangers, he loves politics for the same reason, and himself he has always loved for the knowledge that his mind is dangerous—dangerous to his enemies, dangerous to his friends, dangerous to himself. I can think of no man I have ever met who would so quickly and so bitterly eat his heart out in Paradise (p. 100).

It is not at all surprising to find, now, many people deeply puzzled about this extraordinary man who, at the head of affairs for five years, was regarded as a heroic leader of the British people, and who suffered a humiliating electoral defeat a few months after the war terminated. He has lived to see strange changes, for in July, 1937, he said:

The Socialist-Labor Party, not only in its extreme varieties, but in its most moderate forms, seems to have reached the limits of its expansion. This might well have been expected of a class party, refusing all contact with other parties and professing in theory

absurd and, if applied, devastating doctrines. The program of giving the State, that is to say the politicians who have obtained a majority at an election, autocratic control of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange, would never commend itself to the strong individualism of the British race ("Step by Step," p. 123). . . .

Prophecy was never one of his strong points, for the desire for power in any crisis only too often dims the vision and blunts the sense of what the consequences will be. When a man places himself above criticism and believes that his choice of an action is superior to that of any other, he joins hands with dictators and lends himself to the wiles of Machiavelli.

The illuminating confession that he has set down on page 15 of "Their Finest Hour" explains a good many of the conundrums that are agitating the minds of our people. He says:

At the top there are great simplifications. An accepted leader has only to be sure of what it is best to do, or at least to have made up his mind about it. The loyalties which centre upon number one are enormous. If he trips, he must be sustained. If he makes mistakes, they must be covered. . . .

This scarcely smacks of democratic government. It has the touch of the dictator. Perhaps in this very statement may be found a reason for the rejection of the peace offers that were advanced by Hitler after Poland, and again after the fall of France. Churchill might have seen in such a consummation the rise of a leader dominating Europe and Great Britain, exerting greater power than he could ever exercise. Under a constitutional monarchy and a free Parliament, he would be handicapped and thwarted; Hitler would be under no such restraints. Perhaps it may be said that there was no room for two mighty rulers in Churchill's world.

Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and all the dictators of our era—even from the great Barbarossa—have been animated by the ideas of power described by Churchill on this illuminating page. He tells us: "Power in a national crisis, when a man believes he knows what orders should be given, is a blessing" (p. 15). Surely all dictators will subscribe to this, and no doubt they would readily agree that "Ambition, not so much for vulgar ends, but for fame, glints in every mind" (*ibid.*).

However, it is strange that, although he is hailed as a man who knows his history, he should not be aware of the fate of those who have been guided by the principles of political government, which he regards as a "blessing." Permanency of power escaped them all. The greatest successes petered out in a generation or two, and humble man with scarcely any governmental guidance, had to solve the same old problems anew and attempt to undo the knots dictators thought would hold forever.

All forms of political government have been tried, and until recent years

the only one that showed the spiritual stamina of endurance against vicissitude was the one of Mr. Churchill's own country. It is a very long time since Dunstan placed the crown on Eadred's head.

"Their Finest Hour" is invaluable as a revelation of the character of an author-protagonist in the world's greatest tragedy. All the dictatorial "i's" and "t's" are dotted and crossed meticulously, and Churchill, being *deus ex machina*, does not shirk responsibility for the major policies and actions of his term of office, although he attributes many of his blunders to bad luck and his reverses to the wickedness of the enemy.

In some moods he remains what he was forty years ago. There is something so boyish in such a phrase as "when Hitler danced his jig of joy" (pp. 223, 309), that the sober-minded reader wonders if it is to be taken seriously or overlooked as an inadvertence which indicates a feeling of chagrin. It does not in any way describe the attitude of Hitler after the fall of France. Liddell Hart, in his book, "The German Generals Talk," gives us some interesting information about the mood of the German leader and the thoughts he expressed to some of his staff. At Charleville, after Dunkirk (May 24, 1940), Hitler talked to Rundstedt and to two of his staff, Sodenstern and Blumentritt. The last-named general told Liddell Hart the conversation turned to England:

He then astonished us by speaking with admiration of the British Empire, of the necessity for its existence, and of the civilization that Britain had brought into the world. He remarked, with a shrug of the shoulders, that the creation of its Empire had been achieved by means that were often harsh, but "where there is planing there are shavings flying." He compared the British Empire with the Catholic Church—saying they were both essential elements of stability in the world. He said that all he wanted from Britain was that she should acknowledge Germany's position on the Continent. The return of Germany's lost colonies would be desirable but not essential, and he would even offer to support Britain with troops if she should be involved in any difficulties anywhere . . . (p. 135).

"The German Generals Talk" should be read by every earnest student of the calamity who wishes to escape from the murk of war propaganda and find daylight. There is already much for us to learn, whether we like the lessons or not. Our future actions, for good or ill, ought to be influenced by our knowledge of the past. It is wise for us to be reminded now that one great lesson went unheeded and we are paying heavy penalties for our negligence. General Fuller concludes his work, "The Second World War," with the following paragraph:

In 1919, in their Peace Treaties, the victors of the First World War sowed the wind, and, as inevitably as night follows day, in the Second World War they reaped the whirlwind. Having learned nothing and having forgotten nothing, and filled with envies,

fears, and greeds, they have repeated their evil, and for a second time have imposed an iniquitous peace upon the vanquished. Therefore, they have once again sown the wind, and will yet again reap the whirlwind. Evil breeds evil, and if you be blind like Samson when you cast down the pillars of the house of your enemies, its ruins will crush you (p. 412).

Here are two books by acknowledged British military experts which contain information no honest inquirer can afford to ignore. It is a pity Mr. Churchill wrote so much before he had the opportunity to study these works of his fellow-countrymen.

New York

Man for Our Time: Adam Smith

The Return of Adam Smith. By George S. Montgomery, Jr. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1949, 147 pp., \$2.50.

The principal works of two great philosophers of political and economic freedom appeared in the same year, 1776. These were: "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations," by Adam Smith, and the Declaration of Independence, by Thomas Jefferson. Historians say each has exerted a powerful influence on legislation throughout the western world.

"The Wealth of Nations" is the strongest brief ever drawn for unimpeded trade, neither hampered nor coddled by governments, according to Allyn Abbott Young (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1946), but its chief value is to be found in the picture it gives of the economic life of a nation.

Economists have been wrangling over this picture ever since. Mr. Montgomery, a New York lawyer, says Smith was the father of political economy, and he is supported in this view by others. This can be disputed. At any rate Smith was the first to make sense out of the seeming chaos that constitutes the free, competitive market and this reviewer believes events have shown some of his work has the force of natural law.

Jefferson's Declaration asserted that men, in the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness, had the right to be governed by institutions that derived their powers from the consent of the governed. Elsewhere Jefferson wrote: "That government is best which governs least." He read "The Wealth of Nations" and pronounced it "the best book extant" in political economy.

The principles of Adam Smith and Thomas Jefferson have been falling into disrepute for decades and today are openly sneered at over much of