

which take us, at the beginning of the book, to the end of the Chancellor's imprisonment in Vienna, and at the end, complete the story by recounting the experiences of the author in concentration camps until his rescue by the Americans in 1945.

The two parts of the book are therefore quite different in character. The diary is a most moving document, revealing the deep religious faith and humility of the author, and the hideous cruelty of the power which he defied and was vanquished by. We should by now be sufficiently aware of the degradation of the human character which the Nazi régime imposed upon its servants, but it is as well to see it again in action against an eminent statesman who had been rash enough to oppose the designs of Hitler. Prison and concentration camp, torture and disregard of elementary decency, are here illuminated again.

The description of Schuschnigg's policy from the death of Dollfuss to the Anschluss is also of great interest. Among other matters, we learn that the Italian Government had, apparently, a secret means of access to the confidential files of our own Foreign Office. The point which emerges most strongly, however, is the impossible economic state of Austria as she was reconstituted by the Treaties of 1919. The Allied statesmen who destroyed the unity of the Hapsburg dominions created, by the destruction of that unity, a confusion of races and territories and economic external unity. It is clear that, short of a new European war, this unity is most likely to be achieved by the subjection of the entire basin of the Danube, from Linz to the Black Sea, to Soviet Russia. Those who rejoice in Russian domination will prefer this new status to the old hegemony of the Hapsburgs; the rest of the world will regret it.

Had the Weimar régime persisted in Germany; had Chancellor Brüning been strong-willed enough to crush the Nazis in the early 1930s, all this need never have happened. As it was, Dollfuss and Schuschnigg found themselves in a position where Austria was economically dependent upon Germany, but a Germany ruled by Hitler. Within Austria they had to contend with violently hostile groups, and their attempts to do so command sympathy, even if some of their efforts were short-sighted and even illiberal. The publishers of this book have sought almost hysterically to dissociate themselves from the policies of the two Austrian Chancellors, but the ordinary reader will find it only too easy to sympathise with those who attempted, with courage, dignity and patriotism, the impossible task of governing the Austria of the Succession States.

PAUL FOSTER, O.P.

STRAIGHT ON. *Journey to Belsen and the Road Home.* By Robert Collis and Han Hogerzeil. (Methuen; 10s. 6d.)

The authors of this book were members of a medical team sent to Belsen after the liberation of the concentration camp. Dr Collis is an Irish children's physician. Miss Hogerzeil was a law student at

Leiden university before joining the British Red Cross. Her gifts as a linguist proved of invaluable assistance to the team.

We have heard much of the atrocities and the appalling conditions of the camps at Auschwitz and Belsen, but in this book all the emphasis is on the remedial efforts which the Red Cross was making to cope with the problem. The story is a very moving one.

The camp at Belsen was designed to hold not more than ten thousand, but at the liberation sixty thousand were found there. Ten thousand unburied corpses were lying in the open roadway. All hygiene had been abandoned. There was no fresh water and no food. Typhus and tuberculosis were the chief diseases. The survivors, starved and dying, seemed to present a hopeless problem. The first troops to enter were mostly hygiene men, to whom fell the terrible task of cleaning up the place. Then came the medical authorities, and about one hundred medical students from the London hospitals, a team of scientists under Dr Janet Vaughan, sent by the Medical Research Council, typhus specialists, a little later a team of Swiss Red Cross—six doctors and twelve nurses. Later more military hospitals arrived.

Then followed one of the most gallant actions ever waged against disease in the history of medicine. The starving people had to be fed with extreme caution. Typhus could only be controlled by the complete delousing of more than 40,000 persons. All clothing had to be burnt or disinfected. Tens of thousands of new garments had to be provided. The medical students had charge of the management and feeding in the Horror Camp, with one trained doctor to supervise. Ten per cent. of these students went down with typhus.

The feeding at first was difficult, for the patients would get the food and hide it, but by the end of the first week their attitude showed a change, and they began to co-operate. The 'horror period' was followed by a hospital 'period', when some were gradually nursed back to health. The health of many of the patients, however, had been completely destroyed by their privations. Many had contracted tuberculosis. During the first few weeks of the liberation the patients died at the rate of three hundred a day. Others, however, began to come back to life with amazing rapidity. 'The sight of those who recovered was one of the most exciting and comforting things that it is possible to imagine', says Dr Collis.

Next to food clothing was of the greatest importance. In their striped pyjamas, which was the only prison garb allowed by the Germans, they felt, and indeed looked debased. Their clothing was one of the most important remedial measures of all. But to clothe over 20,000 persons who had absolutely nothing was a vast problem.

A clothing centre, which became known in the camp as 'Harrods', was established by one of the British Red Cross teams. Thousands came, were fitted out, and went away utterly transformed persons. 'It was moving beyond words to watch the transformation. Of course, many behaved badly, obtaining more than one dress and stealing

anything from ribbons to handbags.' To the reader one deeply moving aspect is the sympathetic understanding of the liberators under all circumstances.

The difficult task of getting the inmates back to normality was not only a matter of food and clothing, though these came first. Entertainment, too, was planned. The Old Vic Company visited the camp and played Shaw's 'Arms and the Man'. A dance for the recovering internees was organised in the open air. An orchestra from the Royal Air Force played, and a great crowd collected. The girls were dressed in their new finery, though some could hardly walk. Each British soldier took a girl and danced with her. 'Never, perhaps', says Dr Collis, 'have those British private soldiers done more to make the name of England loved than that evening when these victorious men who had stormed across the Rhine showed what they thought of the superior Nordic race theory and danced with the despised and outcast of the earth. The poor word "liberation", which in the end was to denote many different things, that night had its true meaning.'

The chapter which describes the repatriation of eighty-five mothers and children to Czechoslovakia in ambulance and omnibus is a genuine thriller, and the story is told with humour. The Russians refused permission to let them pass, and a *détour* of seven hundred miles had to be made to reach Prague. The return journey without the Czechs was allowed through the Russian zone. 'This was the strangest adventure of our lives', says Dr Collis.

It is deeply interesting to learn that the relations of the teams with the Germans were friendly. A fairly large number of German doctors and nurses were employed, and many of these had turned out well. Several became really fond of the children. A touching account is given of an operation calling for exceptional skill carried out successfully by a young German surgeon from a neighbouring prisoner-of-war camp. True, says the author, the Germans had been guilty of great cruelties, 'but we had ceased to hate. Belsen had in some way cured us of all hate, at least all hate of any human creature . . . we were able now, for the first time, to begin to feel compassion enter our hardened hearts once more . . . and to comprehend that it was not only *their* sins which had destroyed so much love and beauty in the world, but *ours* as well'.

MARGRIETA BEER.

MAXIMS AND REFLECTIONS OF THE RT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL, O.M., C.H., M.P. Introduction by Colin Coote. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 8s. 6d.)

This small book may be of use in the future to those wishing to find examples of Mr Churchill's peculiar turn of phrase. Some of those phrases which have been included are flat enough, but the majority illustrate the great man's flashes of political wisdom and literary felicity. They cover the whole of Mr Churchill's long political career, and it is interesting to see that the earlier examples are, as