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R. A. Spencer

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REVIEW

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56 THE CANADIAN HISTORICAL REVIEW This volume ends with the Imperial Conference of 1923, where King's Fnxn and successful presentation of the Canadian position was a major achievement of decisive import for the future development of the Commonwealth. With King's accession as Prime Minister and his entry on the task of directing Canada's political evolution, the narrative begins to gain pace and interest. Up to that point Professor Dawson's style is dutiful and generally pedestrian, with only a few of those /ashes of wit and perception of which he was capable. This second volume, though completed by other hands, can be expected to show a distinct advance in interests as to content, and one may hope as to style as well.

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Limited]. 1957. Pp.828,illus.\$5.00. "'v•av.a•L¾ DONV. XT! Andhowre markably e asy it has all been! Nowl'ma real conqueror." SoHitlerexulted onJune 17,1940 , when wordofP•tain's request foranarmistice reached theWolfsschlucht. It hadindeed beena remarkable and, in a sense, aneasy feat.Onlyseventy daysearlier Western Europe hadstood fearful, expectant, butstillfree.The nDenmark andNorway hadbe enoverwhelmed in a daring sea-land-air offensive. The guns at Narvik were notyet silent when the Naziwarmachine rolled westward, snuffing outHolland in five days, crushing the Belgians, driving the British intooroverthesea, bringing France to her knees.In a little over two months,and with the bulk of the campaigning season stillbefore him, Hitler had made himselfmaster of Western Europe fromthe Pyrenees tothe NorthCape. It was anachievement forwhich there was noprecedent inrecent Europe an history. The story ofthis march ofconquest has nowbeen toldin anextraordinarily competent fashion byTelford Taylor, the author of *Sword andSwastika*. It is a detailed, carefully documented, yet admirably clear, andimmensely readable piece ofwork. Aswartime intelligence officer withthe U.S.Army, andas chief counsel forthe prosecution atNuremberg in1946, Taylor had ample opportunity tobecome familiar withthe German side ofthe story. Andit is a remarkable feature ofthis book--remarkable even forabook dealing with German conquest--that it is based so largely onthe rich harvest ofGerman documentary material garnered in the closing days ofthe war.He has of course madeuse of the flood ofmemoirs, biographies, and specialized studies which the presses have produced mvmws 57 in suchabundance since 1940;andhe has profited fromsuchvaluable items as the U.K.official histories. Butthisprincipal source has been the captured German documents, the files of the German highcommand, andthe Nuremberg records. Like others writing in this fieldhe has made excellent use of the informative diary kept byFranz Halder, the Chief ofStaff atOKH,andhe has also made use ofthat remarkable souvenir prepared forHitler, *DerFeldzug inFrankreich*, which contains maps showing the dailydispositions ofthe German divisions in the west fromMay 10 to June 25.These records provide the substance of the extensive appendices, ranklists, orders of battle andsoon,as well as the wealth of biographical detail, so thatnames do not merely flitinandoutofthe story butcome to represent real persons. It is the reliance onthe German documentary sources which enables Taylorto prickthe legends propagated by a Winston Churchill or a Desmond Young, to dealso effectively with conflicts of testimony in the published versions of the mainparticipants, and,above all,to convey throughout the workan air of impressive solidity. Onlyoccasionally do new or startling facts emerge. But the value of the booklies rather in the wealth of detail,carefully integrated into a smoothly flowing narrative,and subjected to anextraordinarily balanced and skilfulanalysis. No one writing or lecturing on the events of the springand summer of 1940 willbe able to neglect it. The essential theme of Taylor's bookis the contrast between the planlessness ofthe German conquest andits technical brilliance. "FromWarsaw toCompi•gne," he writes, "German grandstrategy was asdullas German tactics were brilliant." The Wehrmacht could and did win brilliant victories. It did not know how to exploitthem.After Poland,German leadership faltered.Hitler's proposal for an autumn assault in the westbroughthim into bitter conflictwith his generals, whichonlyendedwhenbad weatherand the compromising of the intentions forced its postponement. *Weseruebung*, the nextventure, was a striking instance oftechnical andtactical skill.Yet,though the conquest of NorwayandDenmark broughtHitler increased prestige at home and heightened respectabroad, strategically it was a failure .It was launched afterAnglo-French plans for intervention in Finland had been abandoned,and it resulted in naval losses so severe as to limit furtherthe range of strategic alternatives when the Battle of France came to an end.Hitlermay not,as Chamberlain said,have missed the bus;butit seems clear thathe was on the wrong route. Equally brillianttechnically was the planning and execution of the assault on France and the Low Countries. Yet here againthe Germans did not think in strategic terms, as hadSchlieffen before 1914.The irplanwas neither a modified version of Schlieffen's *Entscheidungsschlacht*, by which the warwouldbe ended in a single campaign, nor yet exclusively the product of Manstein's genius, as Guderian...

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FRANK McLENNAN

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"I'VE REALLY DONE IT! And how remarkably easy it has all been! Now I'm a real conqueror." So Hitler exulted on June 17, 1940, when word of Pétain's request for an armistice reached the *Wolfsschlucht*. It had indeed been a remarkable and, in a sense, an easy feat. Only seventy days earlier Western Europe had stood fearful, expectant, but still free. Then Denmark and Norway had been overwhelmed in a daring sea-land-air offensive. The guns of Narvik were not yet silent when the Nazi war machine rolled westward, smothering out Holland in five days, crushing the Belgians, driving the British into or over the sea, bringing France to her knees. In a little over two months, and with the bulk of the campaigning season still before him, Hitler had made himself master of Western Europe from the Pyrenees to the North Cape. It was an achievement for which there was no precedent in recent European history.

The story of this march of conquest has now been told in an extraordinarily competent fashion by Telford Taylor, the author of *Sword and Scepter*. It is a detailed, carefully documented, yet admirably clear, and joyously readable piece of work. As wartime intelligence officer with the U.S. Army, and as chief counsel for the prosecution at Nuremberg in 1946, Taylor had ample opportunity to become familiar with the German side of the story. And it is a remarkable feature of his book—remarkable even for a book dealing with German conquest—that it is based so largely on the rich harvest of German documentary material garnered in the closing days of the war. He has of course made use of the flood of memoirs, biographies, and specialized studies which the presses have produced



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