

Pathfinder

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Churchill's Memoirs



Commandoes. Behind the Norway raids was national desperation.

Winston Churchill's pen is as mighty as his tongue. The first book of his memoirs, *The Gathering Storm* (Houghton, Mifflin, Boston: \$6), is a ringing portrayal of the European scene from the end of World War I until he became Prime Minister in 1940.

Like most historians Churchill attaches much blame for our present problems on the Treaty of Versailles. "The economic clauses of the treaty were malignant and silly. . . ." The U.S. demanded a thousand million pounds in reparations from Germany, then promptly loaned her five times as much so that she could repay her first obligation. The map of Europe was cut up like a jigsaw puzzle without respect for tradition and a common way of life among the people. Then, having conceived a next war, the U.S. refused to join the last safeguard against it, the League of Nations.

Frustrate. Now, he blithely informs us, the Second World War was an "unnecessary" war. "After all that we suffered and achieved we find ourselves still confronted with problems not less but far more formidable than those through which we have made our way."

In between these painful conclusions there is a frank, conscientious recording of the details of history Churchill himself helped to fashion. For example, England's struggle to gain a toe-hold in German-occupied Norway is an epic-like story in itself illustrating more than any other the desperate, beyond-thinking quality of England's fight for survival.

Churchill plans four more volumes to bring his story up to the present. Judging from the first, they will become a standard work for students of World War II. Perhaps, aided by his frankness, those students will not feel so desperately the lack of a key to the future.

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