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A CHURCHILL ANTHOLOGY

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SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL, K.G., O.M., C.H.

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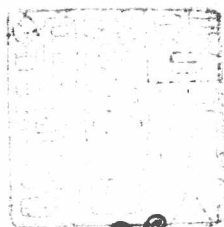
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A
CHURCHILL
ANTHOLOGY

*Selections from the writings
and speeches of
Sir Winston Churchill*

Chosen and arranged
by F. W. Heath



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INTRODUCTION

THIS book consists of extracts from all Sir Winston Churchill's books, with the exception of the six volumes of *The Second World War* and *A History of the English-speaking Peoples*, together with some of his most famous speeches, either in full or condensed, since so many of these are historic and have passed into our language.

The plan and purpose of the book has been to select such passages of varying length as will show the high quality of Sir Winston Churchill's prose and, at the same time, to present the history of his life, activities and achievements as he himself has recorded them.

No other statesman in this or any other country has ever written such complete, authoritative and intensely personal accounts not only of his own life and career but of the history of his country in peace and war over so long a period of time. As the holder of many high offices of state in the First World War, and as the most famous of all our Prime Ministers in the Second, he produced long personal histories which have become classics and permanent and indispensable source books for all military historians and students of war.

Destiny had indeed played its decisive part in Sir Winston Churchill's chequered career when he became Prime Minister in 1940, for the whole of his life, with its successes, failures, frustrations and humiliations, had been one long preparation for the holding of a supreme position of power and influence and for the execution of a tremendous task. The great hour of national danger and the many grave crises so soon to follow were, under Providence, matched by a great man of superb and incomparable genius and of unconquerable courage.

As an author Sir Winston Churchill's writings are, within their own sphere, unique, for with two exceptions they are all based upon his personal experiences. They cover a period of nearly sixty years, ranging as they do from his despatches as a war correspondent in his early twenties to the six volumes of his history of the Second World War completed in his late seventies.

Sir Winston Churchill wrote that "the history of the human race

is war" and Clausewitz, the famous German military historian, declared that, "War is the prolongation of politics by other means." In essence and implication both statements have a terrible significance; but looking back over the long world history of human conflicts it is impossible to deny the broad truth of both.

The whole of Sir Winston Churchill's life and career was devoted to politics and war. His intense interest as a child in collecting and playing with toy soldiers persuaded his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, that the Army was obviously his son's career, and, after a struggle, he passed into Sandhurst at a third attempt. This book, therefore, is almost entirely an anthology of politics and war. The books that still stand the test of time are all devoted to these two main subjects with the exception, of course, of *My Early Life* which is accepted as one of the best autobiographies in the language. But even this autobiography provides much intimate information about war and politics.

In order to follow the development of Sir Winston Churchill's work as a military historian and as a biographer—for it is in these two spheres of authorship that he achieved enduring fame—it is necessary to remember how much he owed to his experiences as a war correspondent at a very early age. It was these experiences that enabled him to write *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, a brilliant account of the campaign under General Sir Bindon Blood against the rebellion of the tribe of the Mamunds on the North West Frontier of India. This was the first book to reveal Sir Winston Churchill's great gifts as a military historian. This was followed by *The River War*, a very personal account of Lord Kitchener's campaign against the Mahdi and the re-conquest of the Sudan. This book contains the account of Sir Winston Churchill's own part in the Battle of Omdurman as leader of a troop of the 21st Lancers. *The River War* was highly praised and further established his reputation as a military historian. It remains the best book written on the Sudan campaign.

He had not long to wait for another war, this time in South Africa. In this war the authorities intervened and would not allow him the privilege he had previously enjoyed of serving as an officer and also acting as a war correspondent. He dealt with this problem by obtaining a roving commission with the South African Light

INTRODUCTION

Horse. By this means he knew much of what was happening, as his books *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* and *Ian Hamilton's March* (based upon his despatches to the *Morning Post*) clearly show. By a strange coincidence the Boer War gave him world-wide recognition as the result of his capture by and escape from the Boers, and of this experience he wrote an exciting and unforgettable account. After the end of the Boer War he entered politics as Conservative member for Oldham and later joined the Liberal Party for a time. The wars were over until 1914.

During this period of peace he wrote the life of his father, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, now generally acclaimed as one of the best of political biographies. It was written out of deep affection for, and intense loyalty to, his father. Perhaps because of this, which clearly inspired the excellence of this writing, some critics have said that Sir Winston Churchill never produced a better book. But to others this praise may seem excessive.

Peace prompted no other major work, but the First World War did so: the production of *The World Crisis*, *The Aftermath* and *The Eastern Front*, from which more extracts are taken in this anthology than from any other books. His personal record of the First World War read in conjunction with his personal record of the Second have secured for Sir Winston Churchill an unassailable position among the greatest of all military historians.

This high assessment is also based upon *Marlborough, His Life and Times*, written during the author's years out of office from 1929-1939. They have been described as the "years of his political wilderness". He was excluded from the Conservative government of the time because of certain personal political animosities and also because of his disagreements with the government on the contentious subjects of India, re-armament and appeasement. During this difficult and bitter period of his life Sir Winston Churchill wrote the four volumes of the life of his great ancestor, John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough. No one was better placed and fitted to write this biography of a great man whose career and achievements were wholly concerned with politics and war. In spite of certain criticisms to the effect that the author took too loyal and partisan a view of the Duke of Marlborough in describing some of his activities and general be-

haviour which were questionable, the biography will remain the standard work on its subject.

In this period of partial political eclipse he continued in the House of Commons to attack the Government in a ruthless and fearless manner from his famous seat below the gangway. He had then time to engage in journalism, of which craft he was always a master. Some of the articles he then wrote in various newspapers and periodicals were later published in such books as *Thoughts and Adventures*, *Great Contemporaries* and *Step by Step*. The last of these has become historical, for in it are recorded his trenchant warnings, which fell upon deaf ears, of the dangers of German re-armament, and his frightening forecasts of the coming of another world war which in due course proved to be only too true. Such is destiny that in a very short time he became once again First Lord of the Admiralty, and then Prime Minister, to "ride the whirlwind and direct the storm" of the Second World War.

F. W. HEATH

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EARLY YEARS



