

# THE MAN OF THE CRISIS



Winston Churchill with General Gamelin during a visit to the Western Front

THIS is what Wickham Steed, one of England's most astute journalists, wrote of the Right Hon. Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, Prime Minister of Britain, only a few months ago:

"Were I asked whether I think Winston would be a good Prime Minister, I should say: He might, in a supreme crisis, be the greatest Prime Minister this country has ever known since the days of the younger Pitt. But the crisis would have to be so big as to surpass even his powers of dramatising it."

Well, that crisis has come, and Mr. Churchill is Prime Minister. For years he has been one of the most discussed men in British politics — but his chance, so often within his reach, never came. Now it is here.

Whenever our public affairs are discussed at Home or abroad the question has always been asked: "What do you think of Winston?" That question has always produced a variety of answers, Wickham Steed wrote. It revealed every shade of admiration or dislike, trust or distrust, appreciation or downright hostility. One thing it never revealed, and that was: Indifference.

## An International Figure

Winston Churchill, Privy Councillor, Companion of Honour, Elder Brother of Trinity House, does count and could not be "counted out." He is a national, an international figure—soldier, statesman, wit, orator, politician, journalist, artist, bricklayer, and sportsman. He is somebody from whatever angle you look at him. He stands for what he believes at any given moment to be the honour, the welfare, the safety, the greatness and the glory of Britain. His views on these things and how they should be promoted and safeguarded, may change according to time and circumstance. What never changes is his conviction that he must do his utmost to foster and to further them. For how many years has his voice echoed through the Mother of Parliaments the warning of the danger in Europe. His words were prophetic and went unheeded—but he never ceased hammering.

## The Party Under His Hat!

Opinions and epigrams about him are legion. Lord Asquith said: "Winston has genius without judg-

ment." A. G. Gardiner wrote: "Winston has always been loyal to the only party that has ever commanded his entire confidence—the party that is assembled under Mr. Winston Churchill's hat."

And his hats have been legion—part of the Churchill tradition. Look at his career! He has seen and done more than enough to fill half a dozen ordinary lives. He is a grandson of the 7th Duke of Marlborough; his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, was one of the most brilliant public figures of the last quarter of the 19th Century. But although he owes much to his family and his start in life, he has made himself the figure he is by individual effort, combined with a quick intelligence which fully comprehends the trends of the day.

## Not Brilliant At School

He was born in 1874; went from Harrow to Sandhurst, and got his commission in 1895 at the age of 21. Wickham Steed seems to think that the figure of his illustrious ancestor was at the back of his mind when he chose soldiering as a career. At school he learned little and was far from brilliant, but he did learn English. Later he wrote this of his school-days: "Naturally I am biased in favour of boys learning English. I would make them all learn English, and then I would let the clever ones learn Latin as an honour and Greek as a treat. But the only thing I would whip them for is not knowing English. I would whip them hard for that."

## The Colourful Career of Winston Churchill

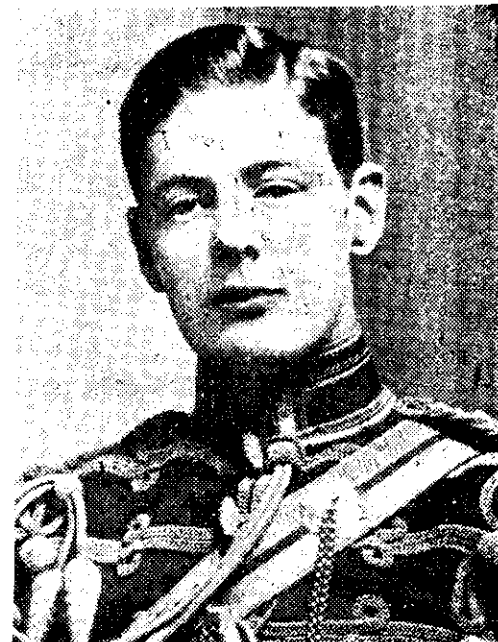
Later, while serving in India, he set himself to study philosophy and history. Before he went to India he had started his career as a journalist by going to Cuba to see something of the rebellion against the Spaniards. And what he saw was brilliantly described in *The Times*—just as brilliantly as he described his activities on the North-West Frontier and in the Tirah campaign. However, they did not meet with the approval of authority; some of his superiors called him "medal-hunter" and "self-advertiser," though the criticism was shallow and unjust. His next adventure was at the head of a squadron of the 21st Lancers in the Battle of Omdurman. His letters to the *Morning Post* and his book, "The River War," made his name as an author and brought him some ready cash, which he really needed.

## Escape From The Boers

Despite his birth and family, Winston Churchill had a comparatively small allowance—so small that he decided to leave the army and take to journalism and politics. In 1899 he stood for Oldham, and was defeated, and looked round for another opening. He found it as war correspondent of the *Morning Post* in the South African War. But he was always the soldier. When his train was wrecked he took charge, but was taken prisoner by a Boer—Louis Botha, afterwards first Prime Minister of the Dominion of South Africa. In 1918 they became firm friends.

After making a sensational escape, Churchill rejoined the army, fought in several engagements, returned to England, contested the Oldham seat again and, at 27 years of age, became a Conservative Member of Parliament. In 1906 he stood as a Liberal for north-west Manchester. Campbell-Bannerman gave him office as Under-Secretary of Colonies. When Asquith came into power, Churchill was appointed President of the Board of Trade. In 1910 he was in the Home Office, but he became so military in his outlook that he was transferred to the Admiralty.

Here his talents found full scope. He put the Navy in fighting trim, working with Admiral "Jacky" Fisher, father of the Dreadnoughts. He was not caught napping in 1914, as he kept the Navy mobilised after manoeuvres.



At the Age of Twenty-one: In 1895 Winston Churchill entered the army as an officer in the 4th Hussars

## In The Last War

Of his record in 1914-18 volumes could be written. He sent a British Naval force to Antwerp and went to direct operations personally; his conception of the Dardanelles scheme was magnificent but, through mismanagement, it was a failure, and Churchill left the Admiralty, went to France as a Lieut.-Colonel, and nearly lost his life. In 1917 Lloyd George recalled him to become Minister of Munitions. From 1918 to 1921 he was Secretary of State for War and for the Air; then Colonial Secretary until 1922 when the Lloyd George Coalition Government fell over the Turkish question.

When Baldwin became Prime Minister, Churchill—again a Conservative—was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, but this post was not one of his successes. When the Baldwin Government fell in 1929, Churchill was out in the cold, though he still wielded power as one of the foremost orators in Westminster. From that time he set out to write his "World Crisis," and his "History of Marlborough." In a few years he was earning from £20,000 to £25,000 a year from his books and his newspaper articles. During the months leading up to the events culminating in the outbreak of this war Churchill proved that in judgment, knowledge, foresight, and vision he towered above most of his contemporaries. He fell from grace a little by his attitude over the abdication of Edward VIII.

## A Young Man at 65

At 65 Winston Churchill is amazingly young. At his country home he found recreation (or did until war broke out) in building with his own hands walls and houses of brick. He is a member of the bricklayers' union. He paints pictures, too, but less successfully. Those two occupations are the outlet for his exuberant vitality. His abiding care is the safety of Britain, the Empire, the Commonwealth. He is the joy of cartoonists, particularly of Low, the New Zealander. When he resumed office as First Lord of the Admiralty he was given an official pass, but he tore it up saying "My face is my fortune."

Already it is one of the best known and best loved faces in the democratic world; the most hated in the world of the tyrants.