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HITLER'S GENERALS

SWORD AND SWASTIKA, the Wehrmacht in the Third Reich, by Telford Taylor; Victor Gollancz, English price, 21 -.

(Reviewed by W.A.G.)

THIS book tells the story of the German officers' corps from the end of the First World War to the beginning of the second. It ends, unsatisfactorily, in December, 1939, three months after the start of a war for which those officers had been preparing almost continuously for the last 20 years, at first clandestinely by circumventing the provisions of the Versailles Treaty under the noses of the Allied Control Commission, and then openly from 1935 after Hitler, in the words of one of the most able of his generals (Beck), "struck off the fetters of Versailles."

It is obvious now how successfully Hitler exploited the personal ambitions of his officers for rank and station and how many surrendered principle for position. Their common goal was the re-establishment of German military supremacy in Europe; after some initial distrust, most of them became enthusiastic over his achievements, owed their promotion to his political "genius," or feared the consequences of opposition. Proof that the subterfuges of the years of Versailles had sapped the moral qualities of Germany's military aristocracy is seen in the evasiveness and lies of some of the German generals who testified at Nuremberg. By 1939 their weakness had committed them to a war with Britain and France that they knew Germany was not yet ready for, but they had by then lost all say when that war would begin. Hitler was scornful of their fears.

A lawyer by profession, Brigadier-General Taylor was an intelligence officer in the United States Army in Europe and prosecution counsel at Nuremberg from June, 1945, to August, 1949. His sources for this book are captured documents (notably Jodl's and Halder's diaries), interrogations and interviews, the records of the war crimes trials, and the many books written by

or about German generals since the end of the war. Perhaps because his story "is far more the product of experience and observation than of research," his writing has the force and fluency of the journalist rather than the quieter pace of the historian. At times he seems to stretch too far for the picturesque phrase that a calmer moment would have deleted. On the other hand, he has the lawyer's eye for motive and his skill in analysis and close argument.

OXFORD ON MARLOWE

MARLOWE AND THE EARLY SHAKESPEARE, by F. P. Wilson; Oxford University Press, English price, 12 6.

THIS new Oxford study is a published version of the Clark Lectures for 1951. From the nature of their subject, perhaps, the five printed chapters have little of the balanced authority and marmoreal precision of Professor Nichol Smith's *Dryden*. Much important work has been done on Marlowe in the present century, both on biography and text; but the problems of chronology and a firm dating of the plays remain unsolved, and any comparison with the early plays of Shakespeare cannot be more than tentative. This book is therefore a series of scholarly notes and queries rather than a clear thesis moving to confident conclusions.

A short introduction—notable for the attention it draws to Whetstone's *English Mirror* as a guide to Marlowe's treatment of Tamburlaine—leads into a discussion of the plays in their presumed order. *Tamburlaine*, that astonishing achievement of a young man in his early twenties who had not yet taken out his Oxford degree, is rightly seen as an early example of heroic drama; and the note on the 1951 Old Vic production with Donald Wolfit in the name-part (p. 14) will be of special interest to producers and drama groups. In *The Jew of Malta* as in *Doctor Faustus*, a double authorship is recognised; and a well-deserved tribute is paid to Sir Walter Greg's noble edition of the latter play. Throughout his study, Professor Wilson is at some pains to underline the extraordinary variety of Marlowe's dramatic work, and his faithfulness as a poet to the Renaissance (but not the neo-classical) principle of "decorum."

On *Edward II* Professor Wilson is a little more venturesome, and he makes a spirited defence—poetically if not

AT TOP OF PAGE: Hitler with members of the German General Staff—a picture taken during the Army manoeuvres of 1938

N.Z. LISTENER, SEPTEMBER 11, 1953.