

the conscience-ridden, to Elba, a female Napoleon with only her Waterloo to chew upon. She tells of her winter there, her term in the purgatory between the turbulent paradise of living with Dylan and the resignation of living without Dylan. If honesty is describing the world boldly as you see it, her book rings true. Her intolerance of Elban shibboleths, however, reveals that another equally honest account of the events she describes would produce an equal amount of sympathy for those in whose lives she created a cataclysm.

Most interesting to many Americans will probably be her reactions to the generous, admiring, and self-serving people who greeted and treated Dylan in his American journeys. "Francis," who "though he made regular sorties to New York . . . never failed to take the last train home to mother"; "Bertrand," who "carried with him everywhere a suitcase of magic tablets, without which, he assured us, he would magically fall apart and disintegrate"; "Jacob," "our Petrouchka"; "Mr. Lloyd," whom Caitlin can only describe by discussing Mary Lloyd. The astonishing thing is that she has nothing truly unkind to say about any of these, but loves them with a tolerance I can admire but not understand.

She is honest, about the big things, to a point that seems almost masochistic. "Dylan was basely humiliated with the disgusting things he dreaded most," she says; "not one organ in his body working in its own right, without mechanical assistance: intravenous feeding, tubes attached blatantly to each vulnerable shy orifice; the head encased in a transparent tent, pumping oxygen into him; the eyes turned up, bulging, unseeing; the breath roaring like a winded horse pounding up a slope; and no Dylan there, no contact. Only the limp hands lying, separate, speaking to me." Yet writing that passage required such heart that one cannot help admiring her for it.

Most of us did not share the gay, upsetting, paternal, mother-needing, sordid, exalted life Dylan made for Caitlin, nor even the woozy, brilliant, cadging, generous moments when he sat in the back room at the White Horse Tavern or in Goody's Bar. But here in his widow's book is a little bit of Dylan Thomas.

THE LEGENDS OF WASHINGTON IRVING: It is generally known that Washington Irving was one of the first American writers who enjoyed international fame. Widely traveled abroad, received by kings and dukes, for a while even American Envoy Extraordinary

at the Court in Madrid, Irving was also the first literary ambassador of the New World. Even after native critics took a somewhat dimmer view of the literary productions of his advanced years, his prestige on the Continent remained high. Since the author of such American classics as "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" was deeply indebted to German folklore, Walter A. Reichart's loving study, entitled "**Washington Irving and Germany**" (University of Michigan Press, \$5), will be welcome to scholars of comparative literature.

The following noteworthy facts emerge: 1. "Rip" was a transplantation of the Harz Mountains legends, most particularly the one about Emperor Frederick and the Kyffhäuser; 2. "Sleepy Hollow" was suggested by the Rübezahl legend of the Silesian mountains; 3. both stories were written in England before Irving ever visited Germany, solely on the basis of his reading; 4. Irving's subsequent stay in Germany and Austria during 1822 and 1823 did not stimulate his creative powers although it did contribute somewhat to the author's "Tales of a Traveler." Irving's acquaintance with German life and letters remained superficial and was hampered by linguistic deficiency. It is baffling to contemplate that "the real thing," i.e. the extensive German trip, yielded no literary harvest whereas Irving's previous second-hand information (often only through translation) gave birth to some stories that are, to the unsuspecting reader, as American as apple pie.

—CLAUDE HILL.

THE CASE OF HEINRICH HEINE: Heine scholars have long felt a need for an investigation of the German poet's Jewish background. Was he primarily a Jew who, while living in Paris, more or less incidentally continued to write in German although the main inspirations came from Judaic sources that influenced both his thematic range and stylistic treatment? Or was Heine a German author who felt himself to be part of his nation's culture and attributed little importance to the accident of his Jewish birth? This question, which Israel Tabak discusses in "**Heine and His Heritage**" (Twayne, \$4.50), but which per se is of little significance in determining a writer's stature, assumes a certain weight in the case of a poet who was bitterly attacked in his native country and who, by becoming a Christian convert and a French exile, seems to have invited doubts as to his origins and loyalties. Even today, many Germans are un-



—From "Heine: Poet in Exile."

Heine—"bitterly attacked."

able to evaluate Heine without resentment or bias, and the same could probably be said about devout Jews who primarily see in him the religious renegade.

Dr. Tabak brings to his task the double authority of a former President of the Rabbinical Council of America and of a Johns Hopkins doctorate in German literature. He soberly weighs the evidence and systematically records Heine's actual Judaic heritage. According to his carefully substantiated findings, the German poet had the customary religious upbringing of a wealthy upper-bourgeois German-Jewish family until the age of thirteen, later was active for a while in an association devoted to Judaic culture, had a fair knowledge of Hebrew, always remained interested in the history of the Jews, and definitely showed evidence of Talmudic influences in some of his themes and plots as well as in the imagery and figures of his speech.

It seems to this reviewer that Dr. Tabak is somewhat carried away by the implications of his study. Biblical and post-biblical reading has influenced many non-Jewish writers in many countries, and quite a number of the quoted Hebrew and Yiddish words and phrases were (and still are) quite familiar to non-Jewish Germans. If one considers Heine's total literary work, it would rather appear that his Jewish background played a small part in shaping his subject matter and style. Dr. Tabak has carefully assembled his material, but it will require an objective and sensitive Heine scholar to evaluate it properly.

—C. H.



—Caricature by James Gillray, 1798.—Bettmann.

Jack Tar settles Bonaparte—a late eighteenth-century cartoon.

A Lively Century

"The Age of Revolution," by **Winston S. Churchill** (Dodd, Mead. 402 pp. \$6), the third volume of a projected four-volume *"History of the English-Speaking Peoples,"* carries the story from the Revolution of 1688 to the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Our reviewer, William B. Willcox, is the author of *"Star of Empire: A Study of Britain as a World Power."*

By William B. Willcox

THE third and penultimate volume of Sir Winston Churchill's history carries that statesman-writer's theme of history from England's Glorious Revolution to the end of the Napoleonic Wars. To deal in brief compass with this period of a century and a quarter challenges the skill and insight of any historian: It was not only an age of political revolution; it was also an age of rationalism, of the start of industrialization, of Britain's emergence as a world power.

Through this vast flux England remained socially stable under the rule of an oligarchy that was sophisticated, self-confident, and endowed with enormous gusto. Perhaps because he himself has these qualities in abundance, Churchill has an affinity for

the period. His first major historical work was a life of his own ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough; his first major speech as prime minister, in May of 1940, rang with echoes of the younger Pitt. By training and temperament he would seem peculiarly fitted to bring alive the greatness of the eighteenth century.

CHURCHILL selects the events of this volume as discriminatingly as those of its predecessors. His emphasis is still on straightforward narrative—on the *how* of history, with just enough attention to the *why* to make the sequence of events appear reasonable. He is handling the stuff of drama, especially the drama of wars; these he loves, and his enthusiasm is usually contagious. Some readers will not share his delight in relatively minor campaigns, and a few may even feel that his historical taste, like the Duke of Cumberland's conduct, is "outrageously and shockingly military."

But in general the narrative is absorbing. It is peopled with men of talent and punctuated by crises, and for sustained interest it leaves little to be desired. The people: Walpole, Pitt, and Burke among the parliamentarians; Talleyrand and Metternich among the diplomats; Clive, the em-

pire builder; Napoleon, Nelson, and Wellington among the military figures; and, in the New World, Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson.

The major shortcoming of the new Churchill volume is that events are often divorced from the context that gives them meaning. The divorce is particularly evident where it is least to be expected, in descriptions of strategy. Churchill's strategic insight, proved in the world wars of the twentieth century, is not always used on those of the eighteenth. He deals with French conquests after 1793, for example, as if they had been due solely to Allied blundering and to Napoleon's generalship, without ever suggesting that social revolution in France had also revolutionized warfare by the *levée en masse*. An even more surprising gap appears in his treatment of war at sea: in the late 1750s Britain evolved what became her classic strategy of blockading the enemy in European waters, yet he does not mention blockade until the Trafalgar campaign a half-century later. If he were any one less than the Former Naval Person, one might even suspect that he had not yet read Mahan.

A STRUCTURAL difficulty inherent in the title of the series becomes apparent before this volume closes. Sir Winston's focus is on political history, as distinct from cultural or economic; but have the English-speaking peoples a political history? Once the governmental connection between them was broken, each developed in its own way. The historian who attempts to deal with them together is in much the predicament of a circus rider standing on horses that decide to move apart; he can only leap from one to another and back again. This is what Churchill does. His treatment of the United States from 1789 to 1814 comes between the meeting of the Congress of Vienna and Napoleon's return from Elba. The reader follows him, breathing a little hard. But what really breathtaking leaps will be required in the nineteenth century, when the dominions develop histories of their own?

Churchill's center of attention is not the empire but Britain. He is primarily concerned with telling the story of men in action, the political and military action that built a great power. The context of an action concerns him much less: he is not interested in the geography of sea power, or the social conditions that spawned Wolfe Tone's rebellion, or rationalism as a cause of revolution. Consequently the significance of an

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