

# BOOK REVIEWS

ROOSEVELT AND HOPKINS, by Robert E. Sherwood. Illustrated. The Mussion Book Company Ltd., Toronto, Ont. Pp. XVII and 962. \$6.

Estimates of the work and worth of Harry L. Hopkins have varied greatly. His enemies have said that he exercised upon Roosevelt the same evil influence which Rasputin exercised over the Empress of Russia, others, less hostile, have described the relationship between the two men as being the same as that which existed between President Wilson and Colonel E. M. House. However, there is plenty of evidence in Mr. Sherwood's fine book to support the idea that the relationship bore a closer resemblance to that between Dr. Johnson and Boswell. To Hopkins, Roosevelt was always "the great man" whose trivial words and passing moods were to be recorded along with his thoughts and actions in matters of weight. To say that Hopkins devoted time and energy towards saving his Chief from annoyance and importunities, and that he got himself abused and thoroughly disliked in many quarters, is but to extend the parallel. It is highly probable that, had Hopkins lived, this published record would have been his rather than that of the present biographer.

At the same time, it must be noted that Mr. Sherwood had a unique opportunity for studying the two men. He lived at the White House, saw them at work and at play, and took part, with Hopkins and others, in the preparation of many presidential pronouncements. In addition there has been available to him a great mass of records, official and otherwise, of their handling of the tremendous problems of the war years.

The result is a great book. It would be out of place for a reader who is not a citizen of the United States, to comment upon the intricate winding of American politics, although Roosevelt undoubtedly was neither confused nor bored by them. The political battles were part of the lives of the two men, and so are indispensable to this account, but the chief value of the book lies in the fact that it complements Churchill's memoirs and Eisenhower's "Crusade in Europe" as a history of our times.

The book gains much from being not

merely a chronicle of events however momentous, but also a very human account of interesting personalities. Although it is obvious that Mr. Sherwood admires Roosevelt and Hopkins, he is not a hero worshipper. He writes objectively and his admiration for Hopkins is tempered in some respects. Hopkins appears in three stages, first as an altruistic social worker and relief administrator, then as the politician who liked to seem hardboiled, who played politics and wanted people to know it. Last, he appears as the unselfish patriot with a consuming desire to serve his country, and more particularly its Chief of State.

Roosevelt appears as a highly complex personality whom even Hopkins could not, and did not claim to know. Despite the handicaps imposed by his physical disability, he bore with fortitude and optimism the burden of responsibility which fell upon him during the war, both before and after the entry of the United States. One cannot fail to be impressed by the sincerity of his efforts to make sure that the peace to be won should be genuine and lasting.

Stalin is here too, and Molotov, running the gamut from cordial good humor to a brusque toughness which at times became almost insulting. But perhaps it is not as odd as at first sight it might appear, that by far the most successful portrait which the author presents is that of Winston Churchill.

It is tempting, but would be unfair, to quote many of the Churchillian flashes which adorn these pages—not the least engaging of them is his remark upon seeing Niagara Falls for the second time after 30 years, that the principle of the thing seemed to be about the same. Best of all, it is heartening to see that, in days when international good faith seemed to count for very little, Churchill and Roosevelt could work together with a mutual trust which was grounded upon something more solid than expediency. In that regard Mr. Churchill has his own story to tell, and it is largely still to come.

Mr. Sherwood's literary reputation did not rest upon this book, but it is not surprising that "Roosevelt and Hopkins" has brought prizes and awards to its author.

J.C.M.