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The Darkest Hour, Adventures and Escapes, by Leo Lania.

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The Darkest Hour, Adventures and Escapes, by Leo Lania
Houghton Mifflin Comp., Boston \$ 2.75

The well-known Austrian writer and journalist ^{reveals} ~~gives~~ one of the most depressing aspects of the French tragedy: His book is - to use his own words - "the story of hundreds of thousands of German, Austrian, Czech, and Polish intellectuals, artists, scientists, who sought refuge from Hitler's persecutions and were caught between two fires - the Gestapo and the French bureaucracy." Mr. Lania calls his experiences "gruesome, paradoxical, and grotesque." But they are also illuminating, colourful, and dramatic. And so is his report - written in a fast-moving, journalistic style: perhaps a trifle too dashing and dexterous. This swift adventurous report is too much of a thriller to be really profound. Yet, everybody concerned with the drama of Europe ought to read Lania's book: because of the many lively snapshots it offers - all those striking pictures taken with a light and experienced hand in ~~the~~ the salons and cafés of Paris, in concentration camps, on the roads - , and because of many a clever, enlightening formulation. Says Leo Lania: "The rich would rather see Hitler in Paris than Blum, and the poor would rather have Stalin than Laval." Which is about the shortest and most plausible explanation of the French disaster we have seen so far. And the book should be read because it contains statements like this: "I don't regard Europe as lost. I believe in France." Which is ^{an} ~~the most~~ encouraging conclusion ^{coming} ~~one can expect~~ from a man who has ~~gone through as hideous adventures and~~ suffered so much - in spite of his belief, or because of it.

A selection from the reports Mr. Edward R. Murrow, Chief of the CBS Foreign News Staff, broadcast from London, during the eventful period from August, 1939, ~~the~~ until March, 1941. What made these accounts so striking when they reached us over the air, is the complete lack of melodramatic exaggerations, ~~characteristic of~~ Mr. Murrow's style is concise, sober, restrained. At certain moments he has, as an observer and narrator, that grim gaiety characteristic of the admirable people of London. His stories contain, of course, an abundance of illuminating remarks, moving anecdotes, and clever psychological sketches. Yet, the experiment of compiling fragments of a spoken war chronicle and presenting them as a book, does not really prove successful. The excitement we may feel when glancing through these pages, is mostly due to the formidable impression the same reports made upon us when they were new, ^{- am} ~~the~~ experience ~~is~~ very much like that of re-reading the headlines and dispatches of last year's newspapers. - Mr. Murrow's broadcasts undoubtedly contain material for an excellent book. But we are not so sure if, in their present shape, they yield a book that has lasting life and real validity.