

Insanity Fair
Douglas Reed

Jonathan Cape, 1938 (Sixteen impressions).
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Publishers Note: Douglas Reed was living in Vienna in 1937 and in the beginning of 1938 when he wrote this book. While the book was in the press the storm broke. The publishers could easily have edited the chapters on Austria to recognize the changes already accomplished. But by this means much of the vividness of the author's first-hand account of the last days of Austrian independence would have been lost. Therefore the chapter on Austria (ch 32) was allowed to stand as it is written. All but the last four paragraphs of it was written before events began to move; and this part shows how clearly the author felt the suspense that lay over the country and shared the anxiety of its inhabitants. The last four paragraphs of Chapter 32 were written after von Schuschnigg visited Hitler at Berchtesgaden, and these paragraphs show equally clearly that Douglas Reed then immediately recognized the end of Austria to be imminent. It came a month later, and Chapters 44, 45, 46 and 47 (which were incorporated after the second impression) describe how it happened. In these chapters the reader sees a sound prediction, based on knowledge and experience, come true.

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Authors Note: None of the characters in this book is imaginary. They all exist, believe it or not. None of the opinions expressed in this book commits any third party. They are mine, all mine, and nobody's but mine. None of the material in this book has been published before, but I wrote a full-length book about the Reichstag Fire, which is briefly discussed in this volume, and it was published (The Burning of the Reichstag) by Messrs. Victor Gollancz.

Editor's Comment

By November 1945 the book had run to its fifty-second impression. This remarkable book is now available electronically, and is also available in hard copy. It is a vivid autobiographical account of a First World War survivor (Douglas Reed was 19 years old when he went off to fight in France in 1914) who strove, as a journalist, to make sense of the political and economic scene during the interwar years.