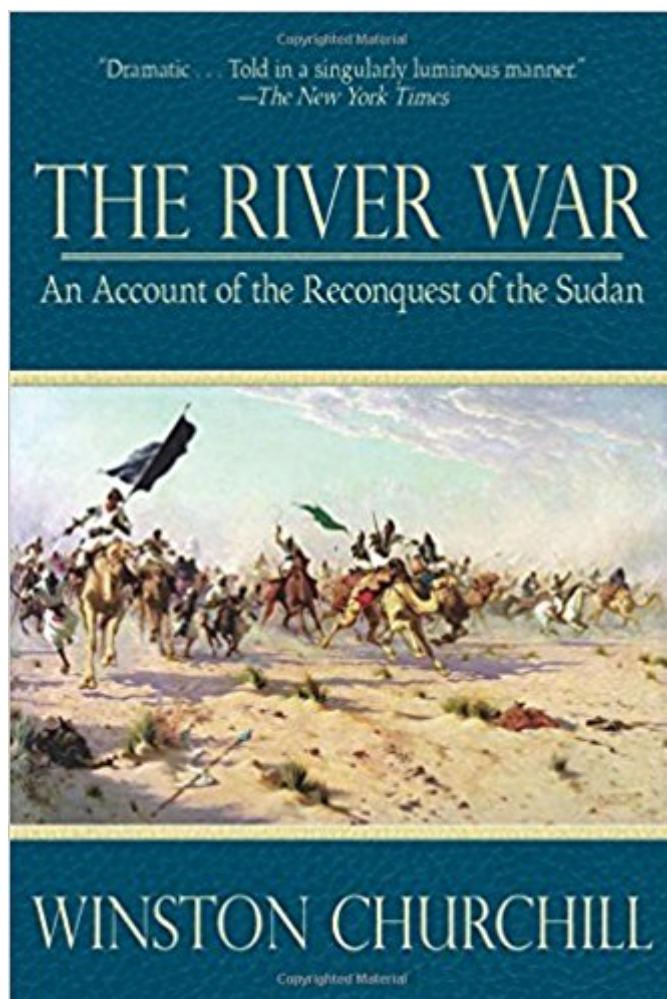


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The River War: An Account Of The Reconquest Of The Sudan



Synopsis

First published in 1899 and revised for the 1902 edition by its author Winston Churchill, this history of the River War in Sudan vividly chronicles the military campaign that altered the destinies of England, Egypt, and the Arabian peoples in northeast Africa. More by accident than design, in Churchill's view, England was drawn into the affairs of Egypt in the 1880s, for at the same historical moment that the English, under Lord Cromer, were granted virtually sovereign power to establish a sound government in Egypt and to stimulate its national economy, the Mahdi rebelled in the Egyptian suzerainty of Sudan. Violence and bloodshed ensued, and the English soon found themselves embroiled alongside their Egyptian ally in a bitter conflict with the fiercely nationalistic Mahdi—a conflict that culminated in the massacre of General Charles Gordon at Khartoum and the emergence of the fanatical regime known as the Dervish Empire. In this illuminating volume, Churchill not only dramatically relates the catastrophic events in Sudan's 1880s, but also places them in the context of Sudanese history. So it is that his subsequent account of the reconquest and pacification of Sudan by a mixed Anglo-Egyptian force under the command of Sir Herbert Kitchener weds history to destiny, as the outcome of the River War for decades would link Great Britain to the uneasy future of Egypt and Sudan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When many modern Americans speak about or hear of Winston Churchill, they recall his indomitable leadership of Great Britain (and its Empire) during the Second World War. However, before his political career he was a soldier, stationed first in India and then in the Sudan. His early

years in the British army formed the background for his first two published works. The first, The Story of The Malakand Field Force was published in 1897 and is his account of British army campaigns in the Northwest Frontier (modern day Pakistan). His second book, The River War written in 1899, is the focus of this book review. An account of Britain's re-conquest of the Sudan, The River War begins with a description of the roots of the Sudanese collapse in the early 1880s, the rise of the Mahdi, and the subsequent Islamic jihadist revolt against the Egyptian government (who were responsible at the time for administrative control of modern day Sudan). It ends with the British victory at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898 and subsequent British conquest of the Sudan in 1899. The River War provides the reader with a glimpse into the early life and adventures of a young Churchill that surely molded his character for his later career in politics and literature. His depth of knowledge and astounding grasp of both the big picture and small details is evident in The River War. In fact, it is comparable to Julius Caesar's writing in The Conquest of Gaul -- exceptional for a young man in his mid-twenties to possess a writing style as readable and informative as Caesar's. The book reflects the abilities of a young writer who would later earn a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953 for his many literary achievements. While there is not a direct thesis to the book, there is an implied one.

I read online this good book, written more than 100 years ago, by famous British Sir Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill or just Sir Winston Churchill. This book is about a war between a then powerfull industrial nation - England - and an Islamic country, Sudan. About Islam itself, Sir Winston Churchill writes in this book these sentences: "How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries. Improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live. A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement; the next of its dignity and sanctity. The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property - either as a child, a wife, or a concubine - must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men. Thousands become the brave and loyal soldiers of the Queen: all know how to die but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytizing faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step; and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the

science against which it had vainly struggled, the civilisation of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilisation of ancient Rome.

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