



## LONDON TO LADYSMITH VIA PRETORIA

[1900]

(Woods A4) (Cohen A4)

Ever in search of adventure, Churchill in 1899 attached himself to the 21st Lancers and followed the flag to South Africa. There, a rebellion against British authority had broken out among the Boer settlers of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and a Boer Republic had been proclaimed.

Churchill secured an assignment as press correspondent to the *Morning Post*, but he had scarcely arrived before he was involved in a skirmish which landed him "in durance vile" - a prisoner of war in Pretoria, unable to talk himself out of prison by claiming to be a reporter, and nearly mad over the lack of action. Typically, he made a daring escape, traveling overland toward Lorenço Marques, Portuguese East Africa (now Maputo, Mozambique), hiding by day and moving by

night. The true-life adventure story of his successful escapade dominates this book, one of the most gripping in the canon, making this one of his most popular books.

The escape story in *Ladysmith* should be read in tandem with Churchill's later remarks on the subject in *My Early Life*. The latter work, published nearly thirty years later, allowed the author to reveal more about the methods and people involved in his escape. Until 1982, when a South African facsimile edition appeared, *Ladysmith* was hard to obtain at low prices. More recently, it was combined with *Ian Hamilton's March* as a new title, *The Boer War*.

Modern writers who say Churchill was a racist should read his conversation with his Boer captors in *London to Ladysmith*. This was 1899, remember, when every Englishman alive supposedly believed in the utter supremacy of the white race, English branch.

"Is it right," the guard asked Churchill, "that a dirty Kaffir [native] should walk on the pavement [sidewalk]—without a pass? That's what they do in your British Colonies. Brother! Equal! Ugh! Free! Not a bit. We know how to treat Kaffirs....They were put here by the God Almighty to work for us. We'll stand no damned nonsense from them. We'll keep them in their proper places"

After recording his guard's opinions Churchill states his own: "What is the true and original root of Dutch aversion to British rule? It is the abiding fear and hatred of the movement that seeks to place the native on a level with the white man. British government is associated in the Boer farmer's mind with violent social revolution...the Kaffir is to be declared the brother of the European, to be constituted his legal equal, to be armed with political rights...nor is a tigress robbed of her cubs more furious than is the Boer at this prospect." After the statements of his captor, Churchill concludes, "[he and I had] no more agreement...Probing at random I had touched a very sensitive nerve."

Now it is accurately said that Churchill's view of native Africans was not that of, say, Martin Luther King, Jr. half a century later. Churchill was paternalistic, and held, if not in these pages then in *My African Journey*, that immediate equality was impractical and unworkable. But his views in *Ladysmith* are in striking

contrast to those of most of his contemporary Britons. Of course, whatever improvements might have evolved in a South Africa under pure British government, the Union of South Africa in 1910 led to something different. By combining the Boer-dominated Transvaal and Orange Free State with the British Cape Colony and Natal, in a Union where only whites could vote and Boers outnumbered Britons, Great Britain established the Boer patrimony which the Boers had failed to achieve by arms; and from that Union grew the policy of Apartheid. It is interesting to find Churchill in 1899 representing the same essential approach to native emancipation as the South African reformers of the early 1990s—and agreeable to know that Nelson Mandela is an admirer of Winston Churchill.

-Richard M. Langworth

### **From the Reviews**

“The work is not intended to be a history of the war (as was *The River War*) and thus does not cover the causes or opening of the conflict, or events at which Churchill was not present. It begins in October 1899, just after the Boer government of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State declared war on Britain and sent hardy and mobile riflemen pouring into the British South African colony of Natal. The main British force was trapped and besieged at Ladysmith, and Sir Redvers Buller, with a relieving force and the intrepid Winston, set out from England to restore Imperial fortunes.

“The narrative is replete with personal incidents: Here Winston indignantly describes a raucous parson who freezes the soldiers into apathy on the eve of battle; there he relates the wounding of his brother Jack, expressing very human relief that Jack will be honorably out of harm's way for a month. Churchill tells with pride of the triumphal entry into Ladysmith, its gaunt but happy defenders, the speeches and the cheering; in conclusion he discusses the terrible situation and enormous difficulties that resulted in the siege of the town, concluding that the relief was worth the terribly high price.

“One of the fascinations of the *Ladysmith* is that the letters it comprises were not written with benefit of hindsight. Reading them with that advantage today allows a fuller appreciation of the sagacity of the author. As an exciting autobiographical slice from the life of a great man, and as a clear, fast-paced military chronicle and adventure story of the last of Britain's "little wars," *London to Ladysmith* is still well worth reading.”

-Stanley Smith in *Finest Hour* 40, Summer 1983

### **Comments**

A splendid book both aesthetically and from a literary standpoint, *Ladysmith* is one of the most sought-after titles in the canon, and readily available if not always cheap. Its bibliographical history is straightforward, though the

existence of only one subsequent impression suggests that Churchill's period as Boer War hero was brief indeed; many people thought of him in less heroic terms after he began his parliamentary career. Boer War fever abated quickly in Britain; the author went on to other spheres.

Woods is inaccurate in his description of the flags on the spine, describing them as "Union Jack and Union [of South Africa?] flag." Actually they are the Union Flag (it is a "jack" only when flown at the bow of a ship) and the Transvaal flag (the Union of South Africa flag incorporated the Transvaal flag in its design.)

### **Appraisal**

A very good first edition, with no serious flaws, no gutterbreaks and reasonably clean boards, commands a high price, especially the rare fine copy in sparkling condition. The New Impression is also in good supply and costs, of course, less. The incidence of truly fine copies of either impression is small: the fawn cloth soils easily, and the thickness of the book and pages induces hinge and gutter breaks. The color folding map is often encountered torn or misfolded. Collectors should cheerfully pay premiums for clean copies with maps that are not misfolded.

## **-EDITIONS-**

**[LONDON TO LADYSMITH VIA PRETORIA]**  
**First Edition: Cohen A4.1 / ICS A4a**

**Publisher: Longmans, Green and Co., London 1900**

Fawn pictorial cloth. The top board bears a black line-drawing of an armoured train, the title and the author's signature. The spine bears the title, author's name and publisher's name along with two flags, a Union Flag flying straight out over a drooping Transvaal flag. The words "Via Pretoria" are blocked red on spine and top board; the spine is otherwise stamped gilt, the top board otherwise blocked black. 8vo, 516 pages numbered (2), (1)-(xiv) and (1)-498, (2). The two unnumbered pages advertise *The River War* and the *Malakand*. Boxed adverts for these titles plus *Savrola* are on the half title verso. In addition, there is a 32-page rear catalogue, printed on thinner paper, of other Longmans titles. Endpapers faced black. Full color folding map facing title page, other maps and plans. Published at 6 shillings (\$1.50). Woods A4.

**Quantities and Impressions**

Woods states that 10,000 copies were published on 15 May 1900, and a second impression of 500 "a few days after," but publisher's catalogues identify the second impression as having been produced in July 1900, nine months after. The second impression is identified by the words NEW IMPRESSION on title page); it also advertises the third impression *River War* on page 1 of the rear catalogue.

We strongly doubt Woods' figure of only 500 copies published. The immense contemporary popularity of Churchill's escape story, coupled with the many New Impressions encountered, suggest that the second printing was more like 5,000 copies, and probably occurred some time later, as suggested by the publisher's catalogues. This theory is supported by adverts for *Ladysmith* in *Ian Hamilton's March*, published in October 1900, which are headed by the words, FIFTEENTH THOUSAND. If we accept *that*, the New Impression had 5,000 copies.

### **Dust Jackets and Variants**

A jacket bearing the same art as the cover and spine, printed black, has been reported but not verified. The second impression has been found in a distinctly different, coarser brown cloth than the usual fawn cloth common to both impressions.

**[LONDON TO LADYSMITH VIA PRETORIA  
First American Edition, Home Issue: Cohen A4.2 / ICS A4ba**

**Publisher: Longmans Green and Co., New York 1900**

Red buckram, top board title/author's name blocked gilt and framed by gilt rules in the style of the first edition *Savrola*; spine lettered gilt with title, author's name and publisher name, top page edges gilt. 8vo, 510 pages numbered (i)-(xiv) and 1-496. Unboxed adverts for the *Malakand*, *River War* and *Savrola* on half title verso. Plain endpapers, two-color (black and red) folding map facing title page, other maps and plans. Published 16 June 1900 at \$1.50. Mentioned by Woods, page 30.

**Quantities and Impressions**

A single impression of 3000 copies was produced.

**Dust jackets and Variants**

No jackets have been reported. We have seen a copy with a debossement on the title page, reading circularly, "PRESENTED BY THE PUBLISHERS." We have seen this device on several contemporary titles, including *Lord Randolph Churchill*, published by Macmillan; therefore it is not unique to Longmans, and there are some doubts about its provenance.

**Comments**

With the same text but not the aesthetic quality of the English Edition, the American Edition lacks the evocative cover illustration and elaborate folding color map, though it forms a handsome matched pair with the American *Hamilton's March* and provides the minor luxury of gilt top page edges. It is often found in fine condition, although on some copies the gilt spine lettering is dull; but it is almost always in better condition than English Edition, thanks to the drier American climate and a superior cloth binding. It is also printed on better quality paper which is less inclined toward spotting. This is a very nice contrasting mate to the English Edition.

Inscribed copies are occasionally available. The most spectacular encountered was a handsome pair including the American *Hamilton*, both

inscribed by Churchill to the captain of the ship which brought him back to England from his American lecture tour in 1901.

### **Appraisal**

Despite its relatively small numbers, the American *Ladysmith* remains in good supply. Prices do not match those of the English First, though a much larger proportion of extant copies are in fine condition.

**[LONDON TO LADYSMITH VIA PRETORIA]  
Canadian Issue: Cohen A4.3 / ICS A4bb**

**Publisher: Copp, Clark, Toronto 1900**

Published both clothbound and in wrappers. The hardback is bound similarly to the First Edition, but the cloth is more ochre than tan in color. The spine contains an abbreviated title (LONDON TO LADYSMITH), a fleur de lis design instead of flags, and the Copp Clark imprint. The wrapper copy (said to bear the name of the Montreal News Co.) has not been seen by this writer. 8vo, 510 pages numbered (i)-(xiv) and 1-496. No adverts on half title verso. Plain endpapers. Two-color (black and red) folding map facing title page, other maps and plans. Not in Woods.

Despite its outward resemblance to the English Edition, this volume was made up from sheets, or printed using plates, of the American Edition. Nothing is known about quantities or dust jackets. Although the scarcest by far of the three first editions, it is considered peripheral by many collectors and prices have not been higher than comparable American Editions. We believe it is undervalued, and should be acquired before things change.

**[LONDON TO LADYSMITH VIA PRETORIA]  
South African Edition: Cohen A4.4 / ICS A4c**

**Publisher: T. W. Griggs & Co. (PTY) Ltd., Durban 1982**

Rough mustard pictorial cloth with title, author's name signature and armoured train illustration on top board and title, author's name and publisher name on spine, all blocked black; "VIA PRETORIA" blocked red on top board and spine. 8vo, 512 pages numbered (i)-xiv and 1-498, plain endpapers. Black printed folding maps facing front and rear pastedowns, other maps and plans. New foreword, unsigned, on verso of title page. Published at 18.95 rands. Not in Woods.

**Quantities and Impressions**

The publisher advised that 1,000 copies were published in one impression.

**Dust Jackets and Variants**

The jacket is printed black, red and yellow-buff on heavy white paper and duplicates the style of the top board and spine. The foreword is reprinted on the front flap; the rear flap and back face are blank. No binding variants exist.

**Comments**

Since this offprint of the First Edition was the first Ladysmith in over eighty years, it was welcomed by both Churchill and Africana collectors, although it was a crude facsimile: the maps are poorly reproduced and the typesetting rather fuzzy. The best feature is the cover, which replicates the famous armoured train, though the original's gilt spine stamping and two-flag spine logo are absent and the cover illustration is heavily inked. "Some passages reflect the prejudices of the time, and we trust that modern readers will not find references made to race groups offensive, but will rather read them in their historical context," states the publisher's foreword. They might have added that Churchill defended the black Africans in his conversations with the Boers, who made the offensive references cited.

**Appraisal**

This edition has been out of print for many years now, and prices have begun to rise.

## TERMINOLOGY

This guide follows John Carter's *ABC for Book Collectors* commonly used terms:

**Edition:** "All copies of a book printed at any time or times from one setting-up of type without substantial change, including copies printed from stereotype, electrotype [we must now add 'computer scanning'] or similar plates made from that setting of type."

**Impression:** "The whole number of copies of that edition printed at *one* time, i.e., without the type or plates being removed from the press." A particular conundrum was posed by the discovery that the stated third impression of the Colonial *Malakand Field Force* (pressed November 1898) carried the same extensive textual corrections of the Silver Library Edition (pressed at the same time—indeed both these books used the same sheets). How then to classify the third Colonial? It is clearly not a new impression. Our solution was to make it part of a new entry, not cited by Woods, the "Second Edition," along with the Silver Library Edition.

**State:** "When alterations, corrections, additions or excisions are effected in a book during the process of manufacture, so that copies exhibiting variations go on sale on publication day indiscriminately, these variant copies are conveniently classified as belonging to different states of the edition." Example: the two states of the first English *My Early Life*.

**Issue:** "An exception [to the above] is the regular use of issue for variant title pages, usually in respect of the publisher's imprint...[also] when similar variations can be clearly shown to have originated in some action taken after the book was published, two [or more] *issues* are distinguished." Example: the two issues of *The People's Rights*, one with an index and appendix, the other with two appendices and no index.

We occasionally sidestep Carter's strict definitions for clarity. With *Savrola*, for example, Woods states that the first English "edition" was produced from a set of electroplates made up in Boston, a duplicate set to the First American Edition. The English "edition" might therefore be called an "issue," but we do not do so because no one else does, including Woods, and because this book is quite distinct in appearance.

**Offprints:** Carter defines this as "a separate printing of a section of a larger publication," which is not exactly how modern publishers use it. To us an offprint is a reprint, sometimes reduced but sometimes same-size, of *all* the pages of an earlier printing (for example the five Canadian offprints of American war speech volumes from *The Unrelenting Struggle through Victory*. In earlier years offprinting was accomplished by using plates from the original (like the Canadian issue of *My African Journey*) or by reproducing the type on negatives (like the Australian issue of *Secret Session Speeches*) In the latter case, the offprint usually exhibits heavy looking type, not as finely printed as the original. Offprints are not usually considered separate editions, but a contretemps arises with modern reprints of long out-of-print works made by photo-reproduction.

**Proof copies:** From *The World Crisis* on, proof copies bound in paper wrappers are occasionally encountered. This is a task best left to the bibliographer, except to say that in general they tend to lack illustrations, maps and plans that appear in the published volumes. Although not widely collected, proofs do usually command high prices when they are offered for sale.

**Dust Jackets = Dust Wrappers:** We generally use the term "dust jacket" to refer to what English bibliophiles usually call a "dust wrapper." The two terms are interchangeable, though words that describe the *parts* of the dust jacket, aside from "spine," are common to both countries. These are as follows: *Flap:* The parts of the jacket that fold in around the edge of the boards, front and rear. *Face:* The front or back panel of the jacket that you see with the book lying flat in front of you.

## SIZE

Books vary—especially old books—and one finds variations between identical editions. Except where distinct size differences help identify various editions or impressions of the same title, one from another, this guide describes books by the traditional cataloguer's terms:

**Folio** (Fo.): Very large format, now commonly known as "coffee table" size; among Churchill folio works is the Time-Life two-volume *Second World War*, measuring 14 x 12 inches (365 x 305mm) which deserves this description.

**Quarto** (4to): Normally lying between folio and octavo in size, though varying considerably in this respect. A telephone directory is quarto; but so is *The Island Race*, A138(c), which measures 12 1/4 x 9 3/4 inches (310 x 248mm), although Woods calls it "octavo" and says it measures 12 x 9 1/2! Other quarto volumes are the Danish and Norwegian translations of *The Great War*, which measure 8 1/2 x 11 1/2."

**Octavo** (8vo): The commonest size of book since the early 17th century. A large (demy) octavo is about the size of *Frontiers and Wars*, A142/1, which measures 9 1/2 x 6 3/8 inches (232 x 162mm). A small (crown) octavo is about the size of the English *Young Winston's Wars*, A143(a), which measures 8 3/4 x 5 5/8 inches (222 x 143mm), although Woods calls it "16mo" and says it measures 8 1/2 x 5 1/2! (You see the problem...)

**Duodecimo** (12mo, commonly called "twelvemo"): A bit smaller than 8vo but taller than 16mo: the size of a conventional paperback, say 6 7/8 x 4 1/4 inches (175 x 107mm).

**Sextodecimo** (16mo, usually pronounced "sixteenmo"): The smallest size of book covered herein, shorter but perhaps wider than a paperback, for example the 1915 edition of *Savrola*, which measures 6 5/8 x 4 1/2 inches (168 x 114mm).

My only other reference to size will be when an obvious difference can be ascertained between related editions or issues: I thought it useful to mention, for example, that the first edition *Malakand* bulks about 1 1/2 inches, while the first Colonial issue bulks only about 1 1/4 inches; or that there's about a half inch difference between the first impression Macmillan *Aftermath* and the later impressions. Even here, the key word is "about," since old books swell or shrink depending on storage conditions, and many were not uniform to begin with.

## FOREIGN TRANSLATIONS

Collectors of editions in foreign languages are enjoying a little-known but rewarding branch of Churchill bibliophilia, not the least for the sometimes magnificent bindings of these works (leading examples: the Monaco edition of *Savrola*, Scandinavian editions of *The Great War* and the Belgian French edition of *The Second World War*). Foreign translations also often differ importantly from the English editions, depending on what Churchill wished to emphasize or de-emphasize. For example, Sir Martin Gilbert's official biography records that the Dutch, through Churchill's foreign language impresario Emery Reves, were offended by no mention in *The Grand Alliance* of the activities of Dutch submarines in the Allied cause. Churchill replied that he would make no alteration in his English text but had no objection to an amplifying footnote on this subject in the Dutch edition, which was duly entered. (*Winston S. Churchill*, Vol. VIII, "Never Despair," London: Heinemann 1988 page 549). While we have not gone into great descriptive detail, we have indicated the broad reach of Churchill's foreign translations.

### **MAJOR WORKS CITED**

Three works are commonly referred to in this guide:

**Woods** is shorthand for *A Bibliography of the Works of Sir Winston Churchill, KG, OM, CH* by the late Frederick Woods, the Second Revised Edition, second issue (Godalming, Surrey: St. Paul's Bibliographies 1975). The late Mr. Woods recognized that his work badly needed updating, and was beginning work on the update before his untimely death in 1994.

Frederick Woods, the pioneer bibliographer of Sir Winston, published his first edition in 1963, astonishing not only bibliophiles but also the Churchill family with the number of items he uncovered. Dissatisfaction with the completeness and accuracy of his work was inevitable as time passed, and Fred, to whom many of us passed our corrections and suggestions, characteristically recognized this. He was hoping to rectify the situation before his death. He can truly be said to have inspired everyone who has researched or seriously collected the works of Churchill.

**Cohen** is the new Ronald Cohen Bibliography, published by Continuum, a product of more than twenty-five years' labour by the author, aided and abetted by scores of bibliophiles and, through the pages of *Finest Hour*, journal of The Churchill Centre.

Both Frederick Woods, before he died, and Ronald Cohen kindly gave permission to quote their bibliographic numbers here as a cross reference.

**ICS** refers to a publication of the International Churchill Societies, *Churchill Bibliographic Data*, Part 1 ("Works by Churchill"). Pending release of the update, which he did not succeed in publishing, Mr. Woods also permitted the International Churchill Society to publish an "Amplified list" based on his numbers, but with more detailed sub-designations to pinpoint the various editions and issues. For example, *The World Crisis* has assigned three "Woods" numbers: A31(a) through A31(c). The ICS "Amplified Woods list" runs from A31a through A31k (in order to distinguish certain deservingly distinct editions and issues. Except for deleting the parentheses, in no case did ICS alter any basic Woods numbers. For example, even *Blenheim*, which undeservedly holds Woods number A40(c)—it is only an excerpt, and probably should not be among the "A" titles at all—is retained by ICS. Thus, "ICS" numbers are merely an extension of Woods numbers.

**END**