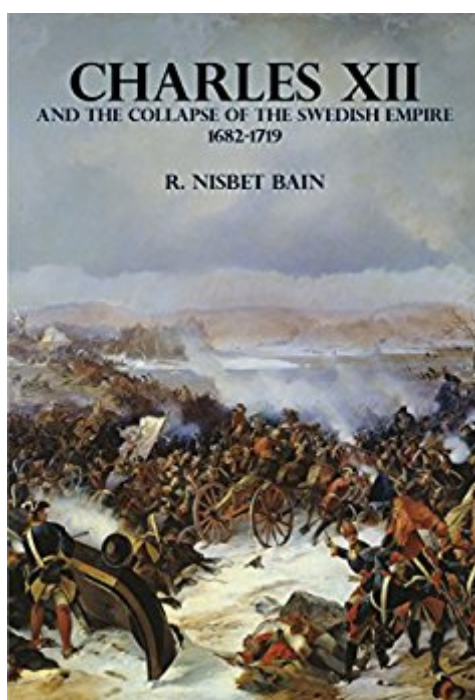


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Charles XII And The Collapse Of The Swedish Empire 1682-1719 (Illustrated)



Synopsis

THE present work has no pretention to be anything like an exhaustive biography of Charles XII.--a perfectly adequate treatment of so large and complex a subject would demand many volumes. But it does claim to at least suggest the lines on which such a biography should be written, it professes to present the leading facts of the heroic monarch's career in the light of the latest investigations and it endeavours to dissipate the many erroneous notions concerning "The Lion of the North" for which Voltaire's brilliant and attractive work, I have almost said romance, Histoire de Charles XII. is mainly responsible.

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Customer Reviews

Jordanes, in his classic work, The Origin and Deeds of the Goths, say that tribe "...from this island of Scandza [Scandinavia], as from a hive of races or a womb of nations, the Goths are said to have come forth long ago under their king, Berig by name... Thence the victors hastened to the farthest part of Scythia, which is near the sea of Pontus." To put this in modern terms, a group of Warriors,

led by a mighty Berserker swoop out of Sweden, head down the Vistula to the Dnieper and take over. Centuries later, Charles XII of Sweden-one of the Enlightenment's greatest princes-nearly duplicates this feat.Sweden emerges from the Thirty Years War as one of the Great Powers of Europe. However, the Empire's founder Gustavus Adolphus, erred when he picked up parts of the Holy Roman Empire, such as Stettin. It made his Empire a target for jealous rivalries in Western Europe. As a result, the Swedish Empire must focus its rather meager resources on defense rather than developing the Eastern Baltic Shore. Robert Nisbet Bain, the book's author, hints at a what-if. What if the Swedes had built their Imperial Capital at the eventual location of Russia's Saint Petersburg? Perhaps there would still be a Swedish Empire today and Russia nothing more than the Duchy of Moscow.Charles XII is a warrior. He sleeps on the floor to harden his body, organizes and engages in mock battles as a boy, and as an absolute King, he leads an Army against Sweden's many foes. He initially triumphs. He throws the Russians from Narva, sets up a client state in Poland, and eventually he is defeated by the Russians along the Dnieper River and forced into exile in the Ottoman Empire. The parallels between him and the Goths are striking. Additionally, his war with the Russians is not much different than the German's fight on the Eastern Front. The same areas are fought over and the Russians are initially very easy to beat but become hardened by their experiences.As Charles XII, goes on his quest for glory in the East, Metropolitan Sweden must pay for his exploits. Additionally, Sweden is invaded by her European enemies-in one instance Danish Invaders are turned back by a thrown together collection of Swedes, many wearing wooden shoes and goat's skin outfits. Suffice to say, the Swedish Empire eventually comes apart, Charles XII dies in battle-like the Berserker he was.This book is the definitive account of the final decades of the Swedish Empire. It is well written and easy to follow.

A very engaging read about an astounding figure who is relatively unknown in the west, but had a profound influence on his country's future.

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