

Goodman never seemed to achieve in life the balance and harmony that he seemed to be seeking for society. In his work he aspired to be a Renaissance man, but his own temperament, and perhaps the times as well, worked against his realizing this ambition. He nonetheless remains a worthy exemplar of the independent gay scholar, doggedly marching to the beat of his own "different drummer," and unperturbed by changes in fortune.

GORDON, CHARLES GEORGE (1838–1885)

English general, surnamed "Chinese Gordon." In 1852 he entered the engineer corps and took part in the Crimean War and then in the war against China. After peace was concluded he traveled in China and in 1863 entered Chinese service to suppress the Taiping rebellion. In February 1874 the Viceroy of Egypt summoned him to continue the campaign to subdue the upper Nile as far as the equatorial lakes. After his success, in 1877 he was named Pasha and Governor General of the Sudan. Resigning this post in 1879, he was for a brief time Military Secretary of the Viceroy of India and then adviser to the Chinese government. In January 1884 he was dispatched to Khartoum by the British government to assert Egyptian rule in the Sudan against the Mahdi. Furnished as he was with insufficient means, he took up a military position in the city and was vigorous in pursuing his assignment; but as the Mahdi's supporters grew in number, while the Gladstone cabinet failed to send relief forces, after a ten-month siege Khartoum was captured and Gordon himself was transfixed by a spear (January 26, 1885). He was immediately recognized and honored as a national hero whose legend remains to this day.

The homosexual aspect of Gordon's personality remains obscure and disputed. From his early twenties, when he left to fight in the Crimean War, he was

possessed by a longing for martyrdom, and his actions fully confirmed the desire which he repeatedly expressed in words to those closest to him. On Russian soil and in the savage hand-to-hand fighting against the Taiping rebels in China, he invited death at every step, exposing himself to wholly needless risks and unarmed except for a rattan cane. Again in the Sudan, whether tracking down slavers or suppressing a tribal rebellion, he would delight in outpacing his military escort in order to arrive alone in the enemy's lair. And in the final year of his life, in complete disregard of official instructions, he courted and met death at the hands of the Mahdi's warriors. Gordon never married and his relationships with women seem all to have been platonic. While living at Gravesend in the mid-1860s, he took a remarkable interest in the ragged urchins of the neighborhood, "scuttlers" or "kings," as he called them. He fed them and taught them, and when they were filthy, he would wash them himself in the horse trough. He preached to them, though not very well, gave them talks on current affairs, and most important, he found them jobs—in the army, in barges and warehouses, and at sea.

It seems probable that coming from a strict military family he was tormented with guilt over his homosexual impulses, and that repressing his urges was so painful to him that he sought death as a release from unbearable inner anguish. In his personality he was both conformist and rebel, one who could never reconcile his inner nature with the obligations that tradition and discipline imposed upon him. His life was one continuous conflict, and he resolved it only by service to the point of self-sacrifice and a hero's death at Khartoum.

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