

Britannia's Reach



By Antoine Vanner

Reviewed by D. Andrew McChesney

In the second half of the Nineteenth Century, Royal Navy Commander Nicholas Dawlish is seconded to a consortium operating in South America. He commands the naval component of a private force going up river to recapture a commercial empire. In effect, Dawlish is a *special operative* sent to handle situations the government would rather not acknowledge. Anxious for professional success and promotion, he is dismayed by the ruthlessness of his employers and the rebel forces occupying the disputed territory. Is the success he longs for worth the savagery he becomes involved in? Is any honor left between combatants, or is all for power and profit?

The story takes place as warships evolve from wooden-hulled sailing vessels into steam-powered iron-clads firing huge explosive shells. Unlike many contemporary sea officers, Dawlish is interested in the technical aspects of the service, a trait that results in mission success.

This second installment of *The Dawlish Chronicles* continues an exciting story of an ambitious yet likeable character, set in an era not often addressed in Historic Naval Fiction. As in the first book, the unusual formatting takes some getting used to. After a few pages, skipped lines between paragraphs and missing

indentation become unnoticeable. One is compelled to keep reading and turning pages.