

Some reviews of

THE SIEGE OF KRISHNAPUR

'What a book. It has everything you could expect to find in a big old-fashioned novel or several of them – characters, suspense, military action, romantic attachments, satire, wit, tenderness, philosophy.'

Mary McCarthy

'Suspense and subtlety, humour and horror, the near-neighbourliness of heroism and insanity: it is rare to find such divergent elements being controlled in one hand and being raced, as it were, in one yoke. But Farrell manages just this here: his imaginative insight and technical virtuosity combine to produce a novel of quite outstanding quality.'

David Williams, **The Times**

'For a novel to be witty is one thing, to tell a good story is another, to be serious is yet another, but to be all three is surely enough to make it a masterpiece.'

John Spurling, **New Statesman**

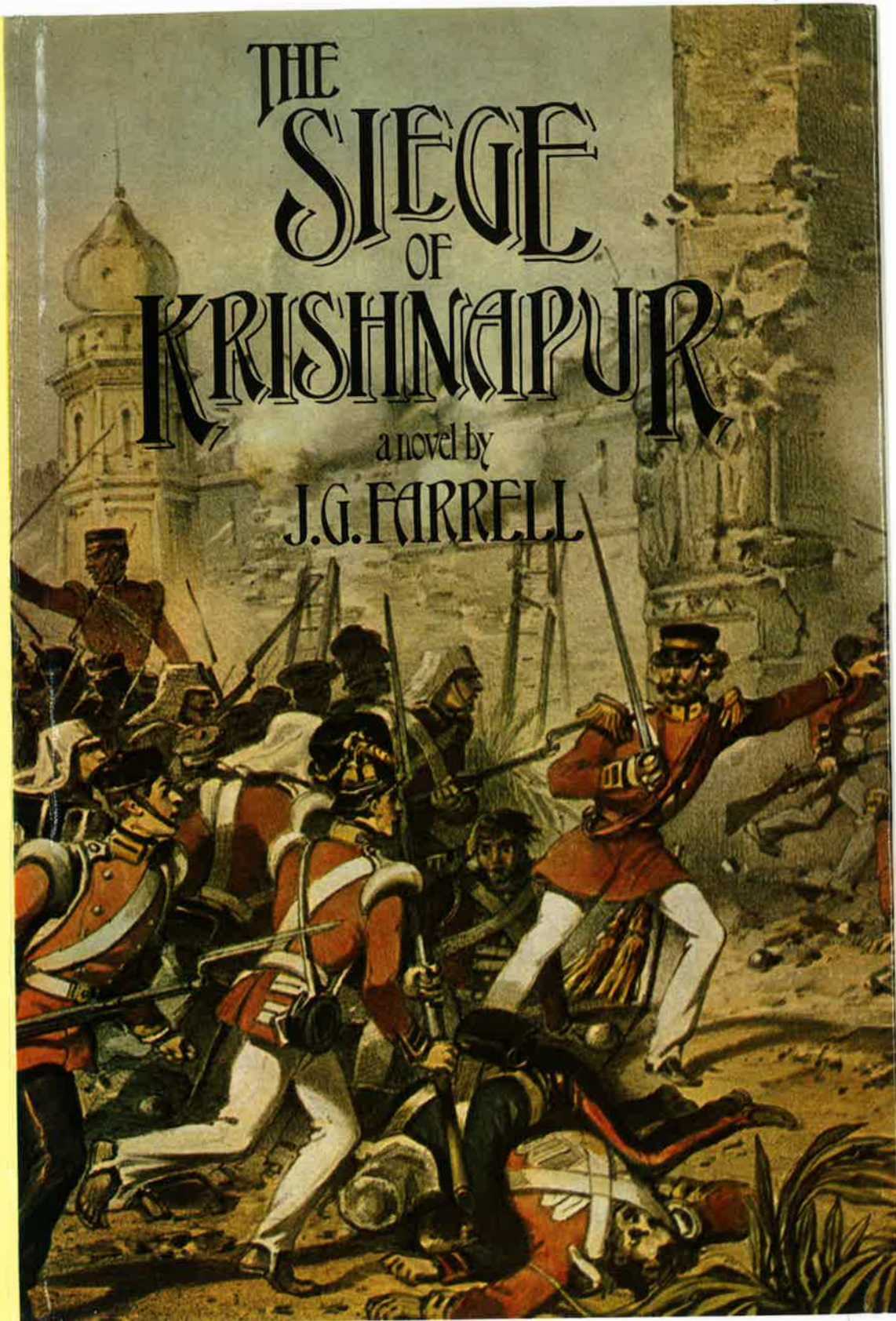
'Farrell is one of the half-dozen British writers under forty whose work should be read by anybody inclined to think that no interesting novels are being written today.'

Julian Symons, **Sunday Times**

Weidenfeld and Nicolson

THE SIEGE OF KRISHNAPUR J.G. FARRELL

Weidenfeld
& Nicolson



*A re-issue of this classic novel of India,
which won the Booker Prize in 1973*

In the Spring of 1857, with India on the brink of a violent and bloody mutiny, Krishnapur was a remote town on the vast plain that stretches across Northern India. For the British at Krishnapur life was orderly and genteel, sometimes lavish and sometimes frivolous, with little else but gossip to counter the heat and the boredom. Elsewhere in Hindustan it was said that the Sepoys were refusing to load their new Enfield rifles with cartridges supposedly greased with fat from cows and pigs and were about to rise against their officers. But at Krishnapur other topics dominate the conversation . . . the races at Calcutta, the latest news from England, even poetry and 'Progress'. Only Mr. Hopkins, the Collector, senses danger while the other Europeans continue to abuse their servants, to trade and profit, and to declare the benefits of their civilisation upon India.

Then the Sepoys at the nearby military cantonment rise in revolt and the British community retreats with shock into the Residency. Crowded behind makeshift barricades amongst the Collector's objets d'art, paintings and mementoes of the Great Exhibition (that apotheosis of the new age of the spirit of science) they set themselves to fight for their lives with what weapons they can muster. As men die and food, powder and shot grow short, the Residency, its defences battered by shot and eroded by the rains, becomes daily more vulnerable.

There is a remarkable diversity of character in this novel: the self-conscious Fleury, torn between his aesthetic ideals and his desire for
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National Army Museum

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price
in UK only
£8.95 net

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the more down-to-earth and practical image of 'modern man', mid-nineteenth century style, Louise Dunstaple, the disdainful beauty of the cold season, Harry, her brother, a 'simple soldier' spoiling for action; Lucy Hughes, Krishnapur's 'fallen woman'; the two doctors with their conflicting medical theories; Hari, a plump, petulant young Indian anxious to embrace the new Science; the Padre, overseer of the spiritual life of the community, and many others. Above all there is Mr. Hopkins, the Collector, a magnificent creation, a figure of heroic proportions, a reserved, compassionate man of deep convictions who finds himself with the task of leading the garrison through their long ordeal.

In *The Siege of Krishnapur* J. G. Farrell has created not only an exciting nineteenth century adventure story, rich in detail, passion and drama, but also a novel which explores the nature and value of civilisation and revives some of the fundamental assumptions about society which we have quietly abandoned over the last hundred and twenty years.

J. G. Farrell was born in Liverpool in 1935, and was educated at Rossall School, Fleetwood, and Brasenose College, Oxford. He spent some time in France and North America and then settled in London, where he wrote most of his novels. In April 1979 he went to live in County Cork, where only four months later he was drowned in a fishing accident. His books include *Troubles* which won the Faber Memorial Prize in 1970 and *The Singapore Grip*.

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ISBN 0 297 76580 9