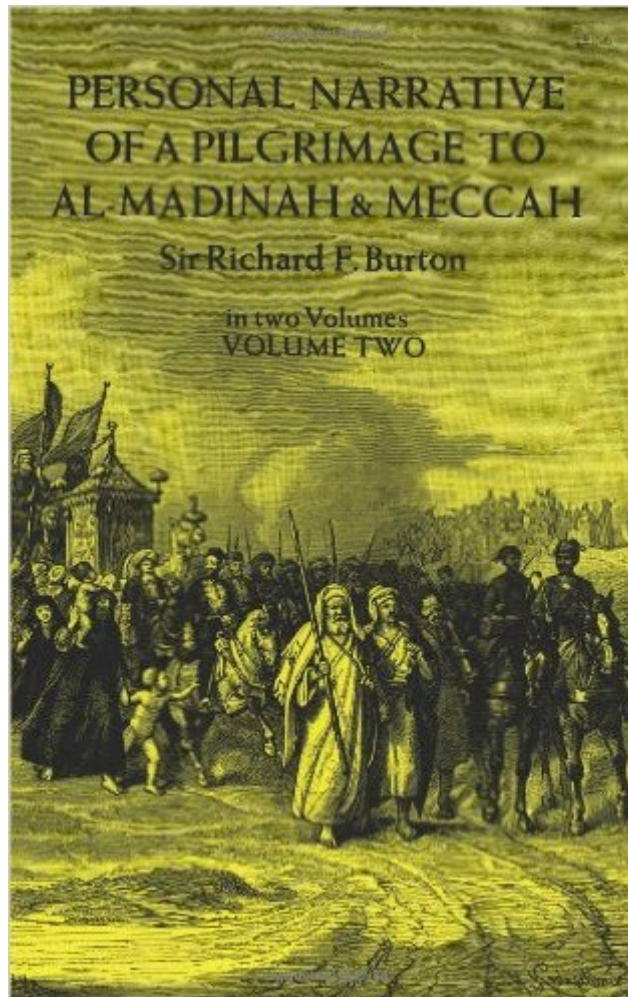


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Personal Narrative Of A Pilgrimage To Al Madinah And Meccah (Volume 2)



Synopsis

Impelled by wanderlust and the spirit of adventure and aided by an extraordinary facility in Eastern languages, Sir Richard Burton (1821-90) was one of the great traveler-explorers of history. He was the first European to enter the capital of Somaliland and the first to discover the Great Lakes of Central Africa. He was also an Orientalist of the first rank. But it is for his pilgrimage in 1853 to Mecca and Medina and the most sacrosanct shrines of Islam that Burton is best known and for his celebrated book that recorded his experiences during the journey. Successfully posing as a wandering dervish, he gained admittance to the holy Kaabah and to the Tomb of the Prophet at Medina and participated in all the rituals of the Hadj (pilgrimage). He is still one of the very few non-Moslems to visit and return from Mecca. Above all, Burton was a sharp observer of character, customs, and physical surroundings. These pages contain a treasury of material on Arab life, beliefs, manners and morals; detailed descriptions of religious ceremonies, mosques, temples, etc.; and a variety of ethnographic, economic, and geographical information. Whether telling of the crowded caravan to Mecca, engaging in minute analysis of Bedouin character, waxing lyrical about a desert landscape, or reporting conversations with townsfolk or fellow pilgrims, Burton gives us a vivid picture of the region and its people. Along with his thorough familiarity with the cultures and languages of the Middle East, Burton exhibited a resourcefulness and presence of mind that were to serve him well along the way. These qualities saw him through many a taut situation in a country where violence was easily kindled. And they permitted him to get to and into places a man with less enterprise would never have dreamed of going. This book's value to historians of culture and religion, Orientalists, and other scholars is obvious. Yet it is as a great classic of travel that it has attracted such a wide audience. Burton's highly personal style, vigorous opinions, and his matter-of-fact humor against a backdrop of constant hazard and possible exposure have delighted tens of thousands of readers for more than a century. This reprint gives today's readers an opportunity to enjoy this unique work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Here Burton finds Mecca and the long-sought Ka'abah. Along with descriptions of the Badawin of "Al-Hijaz," the "Bedouins" to us who "haunt" the normal caravan routes, Burton describes the people of Mecca and the religious observances and practices of the "Haji's" first appearance (and subsequent appearances) at the Bayt Ullah, the House of God. While Burton keeps his condescension and moral superiority (if not sublimity) in check, he will occasionally weary the reader and try their patience with such observations as "the pigeons of Mecca resemble those of Venice" -- and who is to say that differences exist in those that seasonally appear in downtown Cleveland? Altogether, along with the first volume, an enjoyable read and an intriguing catalog of relevant observations, historical detail, biblical anecdotes and legends, and at the end of the volume, excerpts from earlier European "Hajis" (a "Gentleman of Rome" in 1503 and a semi-educated English youngster in 1680). A first-rate travelogue, peppered at times with overbearing detail.

The book arrived as promised

Recommended

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