

**A PILGRIMAGE TO NEJD, THE  
CRADLE OF THE ARAB RACE. A VISIT  
TO THE COURT OF THE ARAB EMIR,  
AND "OUR PERSIAN CAMPAIGN". IN  
TWO VOLUMES.- VOL. I**

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**ANNE BLUNT & WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT**

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A PILGRIMAGE TO NEJD.



PORTRAIT OF LADY ANNE BLUNT IN ARAB COSTUME (BY MOLOWY).

[Pencil sketch.]

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# A PILGRIMAGE TO NEJD,

*THE CRADLE OF THE ARAB RACE.*

A VISIT TO THE COURT OF THE ARAB EMIR, AND  
"OUR PERSIAN CAMPAIGN."

By LADY ANNE BLUNT.

AUTHOR OF "THE BEDOUIN TRIBES OF THE KUPERATES."

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

WITH MAP, PORTRAITS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS FROM  
THE AUTHOR'S DRAWINGS.

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1881.

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These Volumes are Dedicated

TO

SIR HENRY CRESWICKE RAWLINSON,

K.C.B., F.B.S.

BY

THE AUTHORESS.



## PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

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READERS of our last year's adventures on the Euphrates will hardly need it to be explained to them why the present journey was undertaken, nor why it stands described upon our title page as a "Pilgrimage." The journey to Nejd forms the natural complement of the journey through Mesopotamia and the Syrian Desert; while Nejd itself, with the romantic interest attached to its name, seems no unworthy object of a religious feeling, such as might prompt the visit to a shrine. Nejd, in the imagination of the Bedouins of the North, is a region of romance, the cradle of their race, and of those ideas of chivalry by which they still live. There Antar performed his labours of Hercules, and Hatim Tai the more historical hero entertained his guests. To the Anazeh and Shammar, especially, whose northward migrations date only from a few generations back, the tradition of their birth-place is still almost a recollection; and even to

the Arabs of the earlier invasions, the townsmen of such places as Bozra, Palmyra, and Deyr, and to the Tai Bedouins, once lords of Jebel Shammar, it appeals with a fascination more than equal to that of the Hejaz itself. Nejd is to all of them what Palestine is to the Jews, England to the American and Australian colonists; but with this difference, that they are cut off from the object of their filial reverence more absolutely in practice than these by an intervening gulf of desert less hospitable than any sea. It is rare to meet anywhere in the North an Arab who has crossed the Great Nefid.

To us too, imbued as we were with the fancies of the Desert, Nejd had long assumed the romantic colouring of a holy land; and when it was decided that we were to visit Jebel Shammar, the metropolis of Bedouin life, our expedition presented itself as an almost pious undertaking; so that it is hardly an exaggeration, even now that it is over, and we are once more in Europe, to speak of it as a pilgrimage. Our pilgrimage then it is, though the religion in whose name we travelled was only one of romance.

Its circumstances, in spite of certain disappointments which the narrative will reveal, were little less romantic than the idea. Readers who followed our former travels to their close, may remember a

certain Mohammed Abdallah, son of the Sheykh of Palmyra, a young man who, after travelling with us by order of the Pasha from Deyr to his native town, had at some risk of official displeasure assisted us in evading the Turkish authorities, and accomplishing our visit to the Anazeh. It may further be remembered that, in requital of this service and because we had conceived an affection for him (for he appeared a really high-minded young fellow), Mohammed had been given his choice between a round sum of money, and the honour of becoming "the Beg's" brother, a choice which he had chivalrously decided in favour of the brotherhood. We had then promised him that, if all went well with us, we would return to Damascus the following winter, and go in his company to Nejd, where he believed he had relations, and that we would help him there to a wife from among his own people.

The idea and the promise were in strict accordance with Bedouin notions, and greatly delighted both him and his father Abdallah, to whom they were in due course communicated. Arab custom is very little changed on the point of marriage from what it was in the days of Abraham ; and it was natural that both father and son should wish for a wife for him of their own blood, and that