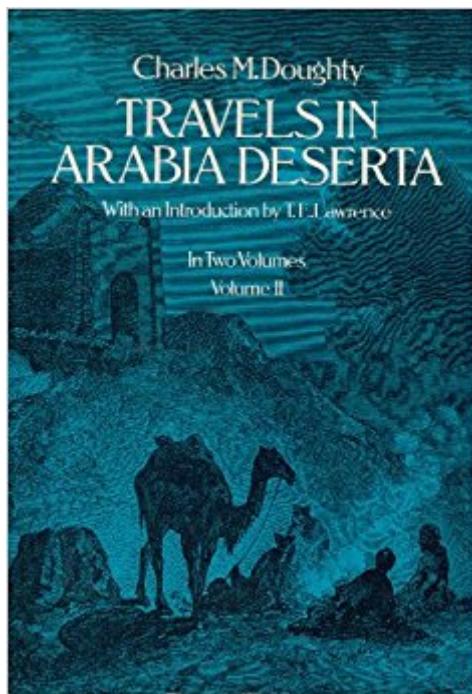


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Travels In Arabia Deserta, Vol. 2



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Customer Reviews

A new edition of this perhaps the most beautifully written book in English is long overdue. Recommend reading a bio of CM Doughty, "God's Fugitive", and Henry Green's essay on CM Doughty and Arabia Deserta. Worth the expense. Henry Green wrote that this is not a book to be read straight through, but in and out from time to time as you are moved to go to it. The prose is complicated and reflects the author's admiration for Edmund Spenser. If you like Spenser, this book

is for you. Heck, if you like "Moby Dick", Boswell's biography of Dr. Johnson, or even The Great Cham of Literature himself, this book is for you. I first came to it from reading Robert Graves' autbio, "Goodbye to All That", and Penguin years ago published "Passages from Arabia Deserta", but that was just enough to begin an acquaintance. You can zip through a short story in a magazine over two shots of espresso while sitting in Starbucks, and that's fine, but I don't find that challenging or even fun, nor do I learn anything much. Might as well read the Sporting News. I might get twenty minutes of entertainment value reading "clean prose". I don't improve my rhetoric skills by reading something that simple. Doughty will "kick you in the pants", but once you start to get his signal, you'll be delighted, I'm sure.

I had read about this renown book in the "By The Book" piece in the NYT when an author mentioned how much she liked it and returned to it over and over. This edition is beautiful with its print and illustrations. I intend to read parts at a time for the history and color of the region in the 19th C.

Poorly written, incredibly insulting tale of an uptight, racist Englishman's journey through the Arabian Desert. Arabs and Muslims are repeatedly described as savages and barbarians, while the author refers to the Great religion of Islam as a "burden inflicted upon society." I had to wonder while reading this dated tripe, why this man was traveling among a people he obviously had no respect for. And if you think a story about a journey from Damascus to Mecca can't possibly be boring; think again. The problem is, the reader is unable to become immersed in this very Eastern experience, because it is written from an extreme Western point of view. It is a wonder that this fool even survived such a journey, with his closed-minded approach to a culture not his own. As far as the writing style goes; if you can tolerate reading sentences like "In my dealings with Arabs I have commonly despised their pusillanimous prudence" then this pile of excrement might be for you. For anyone looking to get a glimpse into Arab culture...this book is utterly worthless.

The most complete study of late 19th century Arab mores available in English. Maps, plates, sketches and glossary. This was the era of Rashidi dominance in the peninsula. Doughty traveled as a Christian, risking his life continually. The biblical cadences of the text are more often than not stirring

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