Visit to the Holy Land, Egypt, and Italy

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TO THE

HOLY LAND, EGYPT, AND ITALY.

BY

MADAME IDA PFEIFFER,

AUTHOR OF "A WOMAN'S JOURNEY ROUND THE WORLD," "VISIT TO ICELAND," ETC.

Translated from the German

BY H. W. DULCKEN.

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PREFACE
BY THE VIENNA PUBLISHER.

For two centuries the princes and nations of the West were accustomed to wander towards the land of the morning. In vain was the noblest blood poured forth in streams in the effort to wrest the country of our heavenly Teacher from the grasp of the infidel; and though the Christian Europe of the present day forbears to renew a struggle which, considering the strength that has been gradually increasing for the last six hundred years, might prove an easy one, we cannot wonder that millions of the votaries of Christianity should cherish an earnest longing to wander in the paths the Redeemer has trod, and to view with their own eyes the traces of the Saviour’s progress from the cradle to the grave.

In the generality of cases, however, the hardships, dangers, and difficulties of such a journey were sufficient to overthrow the bravest resolution; and thus the wishes of the majority remained unfulfilled.

Few men were found to possess the degree of strength and endurance requisite for the carrying out of such an undertaking;
but that a delicate lady of the higher classes, a native of Vienna, should have the heroism to do what thousands of men failed to achieve, seemed almost incredible.

In her earliest youth she earnestly desired to perform this journey; descriptions of the Holy Land were perused by her with peculiar interest, and a book of Eastern travel had more charms for her than the most glowing accounts of Paris or London.

It was not, however, until our Authoress had reached a riper age, and had finished the education of her sons, that she succeeded in carrying into effect the ardent aspiration of her youth.

On the 2d of March, 1842, she commenced her journey alone, without companions, but fully prepared to bear every ill, to bid defiance to every danger, and to combat every difficulty. That this undertaking should have succeeded may almost be looked upon as a wonder.

Far from desiring publicity, she merely kept a diary, in order to retain the recollections of her tour during her later life, and to impart to her nearest relatives the story of her fortunes. Every evening, though often greatly exhausted with heat, thirst, and the hardships of travel, she never failed to make notes in pencil of the occurrences of the day, frequently using a sand-mound or the back of a camel as a table, while the other members of the caravan lay stretched around her, completely tired out.

It was in the house of my friend Halm that I first heard of this remarkable woman, at a time when she had not yet completed her journey; and every subsequent account of Madame Pfeiffer increased my desire to make her acquaintance.
In manners and appearance I found her to resemble many other women who have distinguished themselves by fortitude, firmness of soul, and magnanimity; and who are in private life the most simple and unaffected, the most modest, and consequently also the most agreeable of beings.

My request to read our Authoress's journal was granted with some timidity; and I am ready to assert that seldom has a book so irresistibly attracted me, or so completely fixed my attention from beginning to end, as this.

The simple and unadorned relation of facts, the candour, combined with strong sound sense, which appear throughout, might put to shame the bombastic striving after originality of many a modern author. The scheme and execution of the work are complete and agreeable; strict truth shines forth from every page, and no one can doubt but that so pure and noble a mind must see things in a right point of view. This circumstance is sufficient in itself to raise the book above many descriptions of travel to the Holy Land, whose authors, trusting to the fact that their assertions could not easily be disproved, have indulged their fancy, seeking to impart interest to their works by the relation of imaginary dangers, and by exaggeration of every kind, for the sake of gaining praise and admiration. Many such men might blush with shame on reading this journal of a simple, truth-loving woman.

After much trouble I succeeded in persuading the Authoress to allow her journal to appear in print.

My efforts were called forth by the desire to furnish the read-
ing public, and particularly the female portion, with a very interesting and attractive, and at the same time a strictly authentic picture of the Holy Land, and of Madame Pfeiffer's entire journey.