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John Lloyd Stephens

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### Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land

The American writer and diplomat John Lloyd Stephens (1805–52) was effectively the founder of Mesoamerican archaeology, through his rediscovery of the Mayan civilization (his two-volume *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* is also reissued in this series). But before that, having qualified and practised as a lawyer in New York, he went on a two-year journey through Egypt and the Near East, publishing an account of his experiences in 1837 (under the name of George Stephens): this reissue is of the expanded 1838 edition. The work was extremely popular, possibly because, as he states in the preface, Stephens writes ‘without perplexing himself with any deep speculations upon the rise and fall of empires’, nor does he give much archaeological detail. Volume 1 begins with Stephens’ arrival at Alexandria in Egypt, and his journey down the Nile to the Cataracts; it ends with a visit to St Catherine’s monastery in Sinai.

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# Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land

VOLUME 1

JOHN LLOYD STEPHENS



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## P R E F A C E.

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IN the first edition of his work the author omitted part of his tour in the Holy Land, in which he passed through Samaria and Galilee; visited Naplous, the ancient Shechem, the burial-place of Joseph; and the ruins of Sebaste, the fallen capital of Herod, where the columns of his palace are still standing; crossed the great plain of Jezreel, “the battle-ground of nations;” ascended Mount Tabor, supposed to be the place of the transfiguration; visited Nazareth, the Lake of Genesareth, or Sea of Galilee; Tiberias and Saphet, the last supposed to be the ancient Bethulia, referred to in the expression, “the city that is set upon a hill and cannot be hid,” both of which have since been destroyed by an earthquake, and more than half of their inhabitants buried under the ruins; from thence he crossed to the Mediterranean at Acre, the St. Jean d’Acre of the Crusaders; visited Caipha and Mount Carmel; and, returning through Acre, passed on to Sour, the fallen Tyre. He has added that part of his tour in the present edition; and, in reference to the whole, he can only say, as before, that in the present state of the world it is almost presump-

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tuous to put forth a book of travels. Universal peace and extended commercial relations, the introduction of steamboats, and increased facilities of travelling generally, have brought comparatively close together the most distant parts of the world; and, except within the walls of China, there are few countries which have not been visited and written upon by European travellers. The author's route, however, is comparatively new to most of his countrymen; part of it—through the land of Edom—is, even at this day, entirely new.

He has presented things as they struck his mind, without perplexing himself with any deep speculations upon the rise and fall of empires; nor has he gone much into detail in regard to ruins. His object has been, principally, as the title of the book imports, to give a narrative of the every-day incidents that occur to a traveller in the East, and to present to his countrymen, in the midst of the hurry, and bustle, and life, and energy, and daily-developing strength and resources of the New, a picture of the widely-different scenes that are now passing in the faded and worn-out kingdoms of the Old World.



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TO

T H E N E W E D I T I O N .

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IF the sale of a book be any evidence of its merit, the Author has reason to believe that his subject-matter has been interesting, and his manner of treating it not unacceptable. He has, too, a deeper source of satisfaction; for he cannot help flattering himself that he has been, in some degree, instrumental in turning the attention of his countrymen to subjects comparatively little known. Several circumstances have contributed to aid an awakened curiosity, particularly the return home of some Eastern travellers, and the arrival in America of strangers well known in Europe from their extensive travels in the East. The first of these was Mr. Catherwood, who, besides the knowledge acquired by ten years' residence in the East, brought with him models and drawings of all the principal monuments in the Old World; so that the American may sit at home and see the interior of the pyramids as perfectly

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as if he groped his way in them by the light of flambeaux and torches. Next came Mr. Wolff, missionary to the Jews, whose reputation as the most extensive traveller now living had reached this country before his arrival ; and, lastly, Mr. Buckingham, whose lectures have already been listened to with interest by thousands. The author would be doing injustice to his own feelings if he did not acknowledge publicly his sense of the favourable testimony these gentlemen have severally borne to the general correctness of his work. To the latter gentleman in particular he ought and does feel himself under peculiar obligations for the favourable mention he has repeatedly made of it ; and in reference to any discrepancies between himself and Mr. Buckingham, he would take occasion to suggest what he understands was suggested by that gentleman in one of his lectures, that different seasons of the year and other adventitious circumstances may occasionally induce different views, without affecting the general correctness of either.

February, 1838.

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