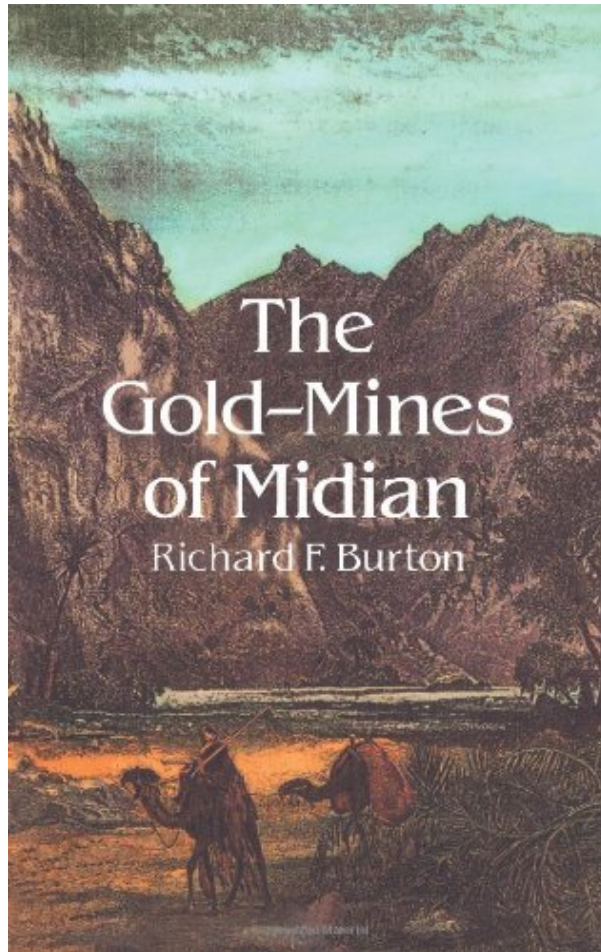
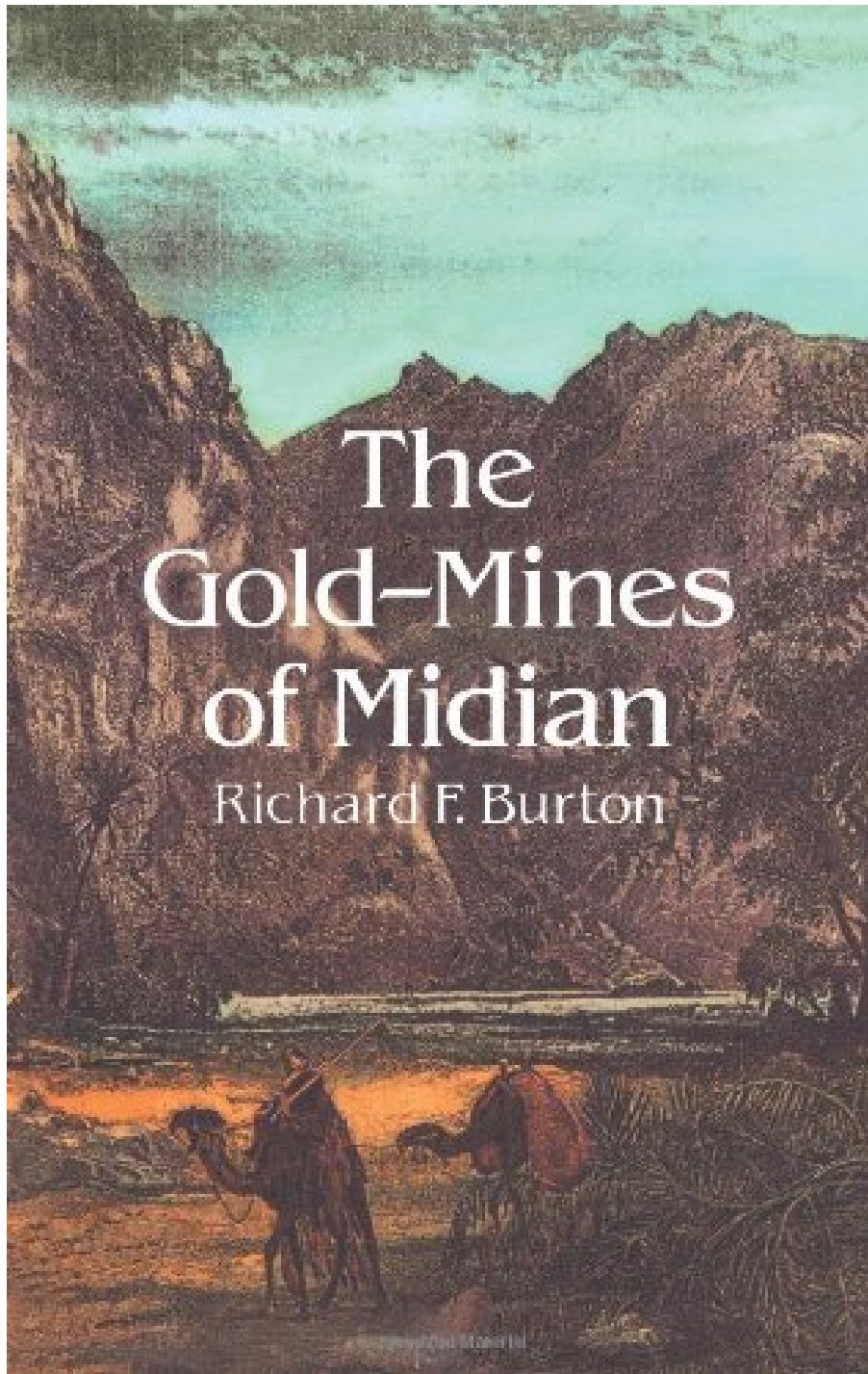


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"At last! Once more it is my fate to escape the prison-life of civilized Europe ... Again I am to enjoy a glimpse of the 'glorious Desert'; to inhale the sweet pure breath of translucent skies that show the red stars burning upon the very edge and verge of the horizon ..." — Richard R. Burton, *The Gold-Mines of Midian*.

One of the great scholar/adventurers of the Victorian era, Sir Richard F. Burton was the author of numerous classic travel books documenting his adventures and exploits in the Near East and Africa. His celebrated *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* has long been one of the great books on Arabia. Burton considered this volume a sequel to that work. It is a fascinating chronicle of his 1877 expedition to locate gold and other valuable minerals in the Arabian Peninsula.

In his younger days, wandering through Arabia with the Koran for company, Burton had stumbled across a "Gold Land," an area he suspected of being rich in gold and other minerals. At the time he had no interest in trying to extract its wealth. Twenty-five years later, however, when Egypt found itself in dire financial straits, Burton remembered his find. He informed the Khedive of Egypt about it and volunteered to try and relocate the gold field. The Khedive accepted his offer and promptly financed an expedition, headed by Burton, to undertake the search.

In all his travel books, Burton reveals himself to have been a shrewd and sharp-eyed observer. This book is no exception. In addition to the exciting story of his successful quest for the gold-mines of Midian, his account is replete with detailed observations and recollections of native peoples, wildlife, plants, minerals, fish, shells, and more. The author's extraordinary erudition and contagious enthusiasm for the vast deserts of Arabia illuminate these pages, which will delight any armchair adventurer or admirer of Burton's work.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 416 pages

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Troubled, Mistitled, Schizophrenic

By Michael Green

For the first time in my readership of Burton, the author avoids criticizing, belittling or scorning his travel companions, largely because his travel companions are little to the purpose.

Unfortunately, most of what Burton writes is little to the purpose. Like his other works, I expected this to be a knowledgeable travelogue and journal of discovery, but a discovery of what? Burton spends the first quarter of the book discussing Alexandria and Cairo before he gets underway (this last detail almost lost in the maze of other irrelevant observations). He names every sedimentary formation and every flower on his route, and then disputes or corrects every historical observation on Midian -- Biblical, Greek, Latin and Arab. When someone washes a handful of sand and exposes a tiny nugget of gold (presumably the intended

core of this book), the detail itself appears as a small nugget amidst so much worthless sand.

From time to time, a promising anecdote or observation on a Biblical place or event raises clarity above the labyrinth, only to plunge again and at length.

Glutted with learning, too heavy for the non-scholarly reader, thick with observations of questionable relevance, and fraught with meaningless, private anecdotes, the book taxes the reader considerably. Use caution.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Historical Treasure

By Jeffrey L. Whittaker

It was wonderful to secure this unassuming volume for my personal library! Filled with actual diary entries by Sir Richard, it carries the reader through a 19th century travelogue which bares unexpected fruit relative to the historical veracity of the Holy Bible!

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Great

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