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**Lady Anne Blunt and the English Idea of Liberty: In Arabia,  
Egypt, India, and the Empire**

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**Lady Anne Blunt and the English Idea of Liberty: In Arabia,  
Egypt, India, and the Empire**

**by**

**Lisa McCracken Lacy, B.A., M.A.**

**Dissertation**

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the members of my family—my husband, Tom, our children, Thomas, Melissa, and Stephen—who have individually and together demonstrated love and patience throughout the coursework, research, writing, and editing required to finish this degree and this dissertation. A dedication would not be complete without including my parents, (the late) Jarrell and Judith McCracken, who inspired in me a love for learning and for critical thinking, and who gave me the energy and perseverance to achieve a long-term goal. I appreciate all of you for your love and support –I could not have finished this dissertation, or the degree, without you.

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“To the generous mind the heaviest debt is that of gratitude, when it is not in our power to repay it.”<sup>1</sup> My debt of gratitude to many people is indeed a heavy one, and I am powerless to fully repay it. I use these acknowledgements as a forum for expressing my appreciation to those who facilitated and encouraged my graduate school education, culminating in this dissertation. The list of people who made this dissertation possible begins with my husband, Tom, and our family: Thomas, Melissa, and Stephen; my mother, Judith McCracken, and my late father, Jarrell McCracken. My parents encouraged critical thinking and intellectual inquiry from an early age; in ways too numerous to mention, all of my family contributed to this project with love, patience, understanding, and positive attitudes.

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Franklin, from Tryon Edwards, comp., *The New Dictionary of Thoughts* (London: Classic Publishing, 1938), 231.

Crabbet Stud. Professor Donna Landry provided knowledge, encouragement, a book, and articles along the way. Friends and family have indeed made this academic journey a rich and rewarding experience.

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British Empire in the Middle East, were important on many levels. Discovering the history of empire is to discover the importance of the interconnectedness of people historically, geographically, politically, and culturally. I entered the graduate program in history because I wanted to study and learn more about the Middle East. I am departing the program with a deeper, broader, sense of the historical context of the Middle East at critical moments in history. I am grateful to Professor Louis for pushing me to learn in ways I never imagined, and to improve at every level, from book reviews and research papers, to footnotes and the text of my dissertation.

My dissertation committee, all of whom are gifted educators, has been unusually patient and supportive, as I have navigated through the myriad papers, research, and dissertation drafts that this process required. Denise Spellberg offered her time, encouragement, and expertise in the early years of my coursework and commuting to Austin. I am eternally grateful for her support, for making Islamic history one of my favorite subjects, and for always giving excellent advice. With her course on Islamic Spain, Professor Spellberg filled in historical gaps that made the historical context of the Islamic world relevant to nearly every other aspect of world history. Gail Minault taught me to love India, and she gave me the gift of time and expertise with my dissertation and providing excellent advice and editing. Professor Minault also had the rare gift of understanding the relevance of horses to history in the context of this dissertation. Barbara Harlow embraced this project without knowing me at all, and has proven to be one of the special educators one hopes to meet in an academic environment. Professor Harlow also provided a wealth of inspiring advice and knowledge that helped make my dissertation more interesting and readable. Abraham Marcus, the first professor I met at the University of Texas, has maintained his support and expertise throughout my coursework and writing process. Professor Marcus has always offered excellent

constructive advice about my papers, and encouraged me to read important texts for greater understanding of Middle East history. Professor John Voll, esteemed educator, author, speaker, at Georgetown University, graciously agreed to serve on this committee. In spite of his own intense schedule and academic responsibilities at Georgetown, Professor Voll has been consistently accessible, and has offered ideas and sources as this dissertation progressed. His generosity with his time, expertise, and advice has been extraordinary. I owe Professor Voll a special debt of gratitude for his part in helping me complete this dissertation.

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To my family, my colleagues, and to my committee, my debt of gratitude is infinite. Thank you all for your guidance, support, and patience throughout this process. I appreciate each of you for your part in advancing the teaching and researching of history in general, and to my dissertation project in particular.



# **Lady Anne Blunt and the English Idea of Liberty: In Arabia, Egypt, India, and the Empire**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

Supervisor: William Roger Louis

This dissertation explores a portion of the life, travels, and political activities of nineteenth century British traveler and Arabist, Lady Anne Blunt. Lady Anne held independent and, by the standards of the time, radical ideas about the need to respect Arab culture and to deal with the Arabs as equals. With an encompassing knowledge of the region, she challenged prevailing assumptions and exerted influence in high British political circles. Lady Anne's aristocratic heritage as the granddaughter of celebrated poet Lord Byron, helped her gain access to the political circles that were gaining power in the Arab world

Lady Anne's journeys, through much of the Mediterranean region, North Africa, Syria, Arabia, Egypt, and Persia, became the basis for her broad knowledge of the Arab world. She pursued an intimate knowledge of Bedouin life in Arabia, the town Arab culture of Syria and Mesopotamia, and the politics of nationalism in Egypt. Lady Anne developed an important worldview, egalitarian in its outlook, with a consistent, even cosmopolitan, set of social and moral parameters that knew no skin color or race.

Lady Anne's well-known husband, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, developed a reputation as an anti-imperialist, political activist, and political writer. Anne was her husband's partner in marriage, politics, and travel, and her numerous journals provide a record of their journeys and political activities offering an original new look at her virtually unknown work, while bringing new perspective to his. This dissertation focuses primarily on Lady Anne's most politically active decade, 1880-1890, along with biographical

details that influenced her political persona. Lady Anne Blunt and her husband made a substantial contribution to the Egyptian National Party, the defense of Egyptian revolutionaries after their defeat, and the restoration of nationalistic pride in Egypt during the British occupation. Lady Anne's influence reached beyond Egypt as well, as she partnered with indigenous inhabitants for justice and liberty in the so-called jewels in the imperial crown.

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## Introduction

Ada...hoped Annabella [Lady Anne's childhood name] would "be kind enough to be a metaphysician and a mathematician instead of a silly minikin..."<sup>2</sup>

Both the journal written by Lady Anne Blunt, and the notes added by her husband, are much more valuable contributions to geographical science than they claim to be, and cannot be neglected even where such close observers of Arab life as Palgrave, Guarmani, and Doughty have recorded their experiences, or explorers have passed as well equipped as Wallin, Huber, and Euting.<sup>3</sup>

The life and political activities of Lady Anne Isabella Noel Blunt do not fit easily into the genre and published accounts of her Victorian contemporaries. When one thinks of Lady Anne Blunt, one normally thinks of her as the poet Lord Byron's granddaughter, an intrepid desert traveler of the nineteenth century, the founder of the famous Crabbet Arabian Stud, or the long-suffering wife of the anti-imperialist (and widely regarded serial philanderer), Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. What is less known about Lady Anne was her lifelong commitment to pursuing a useful purpose in her life, which was the driving force behind her legendary desert travels. Also virtually unknown was Lady Anne's political activity, individually and as a partner with Wilfrid; activity which was grounded in the knowledge she gained from being all of the other Lady Annes for which she is more widely known. As the Lady Anne of Crabbet Stud, her pursuit of Arabian horses took her to the deserts and villages of the Arab world, and in the process imbued her with the knowledge of the eastern world that provided the backdrop to her political efforts. As

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<sup>2</sup> H.V.F. Winstone, *Lady Anne Blunt: A Biography* (London: Barzan, 2003), 22. There is more discussion about Lady Anne's parents' influences on her in the Background section of this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> David George Hogarth, *The Penetration of Arabia: A Record of the Development of Western Knowledge Concerning the Arabian Peninsula* (New York: Frederick Stokes, 1904), 254. Wallin refers to Georg Wallin, a Danish explorer who traveled to Arabia in 1845 under the auspices of his government; Julius Euting, an expert in epigraphy from Strasburg who followed the Blunts four years later; Charles Huber explored in a similar time, two to three years after the Blunts. Most of these latter explorers sought to record and translate the ancient rock inscriptions in the desert.

Lady Anne, wife of Wilfrid, she met, and often befriended, the leading thinkers, revolutionaries, imperialists, and anti-imperialists of her day. Lady Anne, along with Wilfrid, provided the political language and media outlets for Egyptian nationalism as it appeared in the British press, and an alternative voice to what became the political language of the government and eventually the official mind.

Anne did not claim to be a rebel; she did not seek the stage in the various women's movements of her time. She supported some of the women's movements, such as serving as the first president of the Kidderminster Women's Liberal Association.<sup>4</sup> Anne never viewed herself as a rebel, and participated in such organizations in an effort to find greater political success for the victims of what she saw as imperial injustice. Anne's activities did not revolve around her own personal agenda, but rather revolved around what she believed she could accomplish politically on behalf of those who lacked a voice in the British Empire.<sup>5</sup> Unlike many of her British compatriots, Anne did not view with favor the civilizing efforts of imperial reformers, often based in a Darwin-

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<sup>4</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 24 October 1887. Lady Anne kept a copy of the program from her inaugural meeting as president. Lady Anne's active association with liberal political interests in England and in the East presents a contradiction to a statement by Billie Melman in *Women's Orients, English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 61. Melman refers to Lady Anne as one of the conservative women of her era. Anne repeatedly expressed her admiration for liberal values throughout her journals, especially in the context of victims of empire in Egypt, Arabia, India, and Ireland. Melman did acknowledge Lady Anne's ability to view women of the harems with a historical perspective rather than a purely feminist perspective. Anne did not see the harem as an institution that needed to be changed. In her perspective, Anne was able to allow the eastern culture to maintain its own integrity; she did not view western culture as inherently superior.

<sup>5</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 2. Burton investigated British Victorian women, many of them contemporaries of Lady Anne, and these women's efforts to achieve greater equality for either themselves or their imperial sisters. Regarding empire itself, Burton states, "There were few who disagreed with its values, even if they questioned the efficiency of its agents or the effectiveness of its agencies." Lady Anne Blunt did question the values, the efficiency, and any pretense of effectiveness of the British Empire. Anne not only questioned, but criticized, the corruption and duplicity she saw in the empire's subjugation of its native inhabitants.

inspired superiority.<sup>6</sup> The political reforms of the Ottoman Empire during Lady Anne's politically active period drew criticism from her:

If they [the Ottoman Empire and its reformist leaders] would limit themselves to abolishing corruption and bribery and not try to introduce European habits and ways of life such for instance as macademised roads and a complicated system of drainage—if they would let alone everything except what is actually unjust and wrong, these countries require nothing more. But from all I hear of the new Vally, who is said to have already got his head full of projects of widening streets and making new buildings—I fear Midhat has wrong ideas to begin with. All these whitewashings are merely on the surface and are not of the least use to the inhabitants of the country.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike many of the Victorian travelers of her day, Lady Anne appreciated eastern culture as a viable culture in its own right. She was not inspired to change it, or to “improve” it along European lines like her contemporaries. The feminist influences that most often informed Anne's compatriots were based in Christian evangelical thought, which implied western supremacy.<sup>8</sup> For Anne, an improvement in justice and civic integrity for native inhabitants was the most important type of constructive activism that reform could inspire. In all of her roles, Lady Anne used her knowledge and experience in the Arab world, and her political and social connections in her homeland to work for justice and self-determination in the imperial lands where she traveled and lived.

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<sup>6</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Burdens*, 2. One of the themes of this dissertation is how Lady Anne's worldview was different than that of the majority of her compatriots. Burton's book does not list Lady Anne in the index, even though Anne was active in the Ladies Liberal Association. Anne did not make an effort to seek recognition or credit for her efforts. Hers were efforts to seek justice, not press attention.

<sup>7</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53896, 8 December 1878. Lady Anne and Wilfrid were in the area of Aleppo, Syria, at the time. Anne's criticism of empire here refers to the Ottoman; three years later, she made similar arguments against the British Empire in Egypt and in other imperial territories.

<sup>8</sup> Burton, *Burdens of Empire*, 75. Here Burton describes the nature of Christian superiority that provided the foundation for contemporary missionary-like activity. By comparing women of foreign religious and cultural background, the goal for Victorian women of conscience was to use Christianity to “raise women to their destined natural place...” Lady Anne did not share this mentality.

The political career of Lady Anne Blunt provides an important and prescient look at Egypt, the Arab world, and the British Empire of the late nineteenth century. Lady Anne's travels, activities, and journals are a chronicle of the relationship between the Arab world and Britain as that relationship evolved from commercial influence, Orientalist fascination, and trade, to the "Eastern Question" and full-fledged empire.<sup>9</sup> This dissertation does not debate the issues raised in Professor Edward Said's pivotal work, which is based on the nineteenth century relationship between Britain, France, and the "Orient," an area that included the lands of the Bible and of India. Said's book, published a century after the Blunts' travels, is useful for this study because the terminology of Orientalism is relevant to Lady Anne Blunt's time. She acknowledged and commented on the perceptions held by her countrymen that supported some of Said's later arguments, such as the tendency of western writers and travelers to portray the east as a world of, "Oriental despotism, Oriental splendor, cruelty, sensuality."<sup>10</sup> As Lady Anne became more informed and active in Egyptian politics, she experienced what could be termed Orientalist sentiments on the part of various British officials and compatriots.<sup>11</sup> It is remarkable that Lady Anne's husband, Wilfrid Blunt, is the only Victorian traveler and writer about the eastern world whom Said acknowledged as having avoided "the

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<sup>9</sup> L. Carl Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 74. The "Eastern Question" involved the relationship between the great powers of Europe and Egypt, as well as other Ottoman territories. The great powers postured themselves to be able to use Ottoman lands when the old empire dissolved; the question was when it would dissolve and who would maneuver the greatest advantage from it.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, Vintage, 1979), 4. Lady Anne's journals have many examples that would have fit into Said's model, and this dissertation will provide some of those examples, but they will not necessarily be noted as Orientalist. Lady Anne did not fit into Said's generalization of western travelers who viewed themselves as inherently superior to the inhabitants of Egypt and the broader Arab world.

<sup>11</sup> Lady Anne wrote about the sentiments of officials such as Auckland Colvin, who manipulated British response to Egyptian nationalists, and who reinterpreted the wishes of the Sultan to the Egyptian nationalists, all in an effort to forestall Egyptian independence. Colvin harbored the hostility to Egyptians that reflected what Said would later call Orientalism.



traditional Western hostility to and fear of the Orient,” Said does not mention specifically Lady Anne’s writings or political activities, but since her political writings were unpublished, it is possible that he was unaware of her thought and influence.<sup>12</sup> Lady Anne could not know of the future discussions that would attempt to define the Empire of her time and its relationship to the East, or the Orient. Through her travels, she knew the region, the people, the culture, and the languages, and applied her pragmatic sense of social justice to each region she visited, including her homeland.

In addition to providing a comprehensive view of political events as they occurred, Lady Anne’s documented breadth of travel, depth of personal perception, and political activity connected the pillars of the British Empire—for her, the politics of Egypt, Arabia, India, and Ireland, were interconnected.<sup>13</sup> Lady Anne’s life and political activity are historically relevant, grounded as they are in her time of active political history, and they demonstrate the value of historical inquiry for political policy, both in her time and the modern period.<sup>14</sup> She began her life with the charge from her parents of pursuing a useful purpose in life; she succeeded exponentially beyond any expectations, and her legacy has maintained its relevance a century after the end of her long life.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 237. The question here is that since Said acknowledged Wilfrid’s unusual, if not unique ability to view the east with equanimity, would Said have realized Lady Anne’s similar, if not more expansive, ability to view the east with an egalitarian, or arguably cosmopolitan point of view. Would two exceptions to Said’s argument have impacted the force of his argument? That is a question for another body of research, but is worth considering.

<sup>13</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner, 1991), 284. Hourani discusses the role of the European powers in the occupation of Egypt and the resulting resistance of the local people. For Lady Anne, this concept included the occupation of India and the oppression of the Irish.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Beck, *Using History, Making British Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 7. Beck raises the important argument of the use of history in formulating British policy. Lady Anne often mentioned the lack of historical knowledge prevalent in the administrators and leaders who formulated policy. Beck’s modern themes relate to those of Lady Anne’s time.

<sup>15</sup> H.V.F. Winstone, *Lady Anne Blunt*, 22.

Lady Anne and her husband, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, documented pivotal international events as they occurred in the process of the British Empire's expanding its territories.<sup>16</sup> Lady Anne's writings and activities demonstrated important themes of empire, such as the relationship between the Egyptian Revolution of 1882, the conflict between Muhammad Ibn Rashid and Abdul Aziz in Arabia, Home Rule in Ireland, and the emerging role of Muslim and Hindu political leaders in India. Her writings also provide a useful account of the British government's effort to control or contain criticism of its foreign policy. Lady Anne Blunt not only chronicled the events of her time, but her worldview represented thought and action that did not become widely accepted in political circles until after the First World War.<sup>17</sup> It was after the Second World War and the middle of the twentieth century before views like Lady Anne's became an integral part of the world's political language.

The locations from which Lady Anne and Wilfrid pursued their political courses are indicative of the emerging hubs of imperial activity. At the time of Anne's early political writings, they were in Cairo, Egypt. Cairo represented not only an active international cultural and social center for the region, but it was the gateway to Africa,

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<sup>16</sup>Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 284, see n3 above. See also Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 47. Cole refers to Wilfrid and his participation in the struggle between Egypt and Britain for the former's independence, but does not mention Lady Anne. Cole also describes Wilfrid as a "gadfly," likely due to the widespread opinions of him at the time.

<sup>17</sup>Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 63. An Egyptian delegation, in 1919, traveled to Paris in hopes of reaping the benefits of Wilsonian inspiration to spread the ideas of self-government to Britain's imperial lands. They hoped and expected American President Wilson to enforce his fourteen points so that the British would leave Egypt; Egyptian disappointment led to the Egyptian Revolution of 1919.

Note regarding names: In Lady Anne's journals, she uses the nineteenth century spelling of Mohammed; this dissertation uses the current spelling of Muhammad, except in the case of Lady Anne's reference to Muslim people, which during her time were often referred to as "Mohammedans." This terminology remains in her quoted passages in an effort to allow Anne to speak for herself in the accepted language of her time.

the Suez Canal and the Canal's links to the trade routes of the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and India. Cairo was also the political, financial, and cultural hub of the Ottoman Empire in Egypt, Africa, and the Arab world at that time; London was its counterpart in England.<sup>18</sup> Cairo, as an ancient city and a popular social destination for imperial patrons and oriental travelers, provided a glimpse of the exotic east, for those who wanted such an experience, without the ambitious and dangerous travels into the Arab deserts or into Africa.

Lady Anne absorbed all that Cairo had to offer, and rather than satiating her thirst for the east, its horses, its people, and its culture, Cairo inspired her to go forth more deeply into the Arab world. The knowledge of Egyptians and Arabs that she gained provided her with a grasp of the Arabs' ideals of justice, law, and culture.<sup>19</sup> She recorded her own observations, as well as the thought and aspirations of the people she met from the cities, villages, and tents of the greater Egyptian and Arab world. The broad base of Anne's ethnographic knowledge was unparalleled for generations after her time, and her journals provide important insight into the culture of the Arab world as well as its political potential during her travels there.

Lady Anne kept a journal for most of her eighty years, and the journals of her travels and political activities are important with their insights into some of the nineteenth century's most important events, such as the Egyptian revolution of 1882 and its

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<sup>18</sup> L. Carl Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East*, 72.

<sup>19</sup> H.R.P. Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1949), 53. Dickson was born in Syria while his father was British consul there. His lifelong association with the region gave him access to Bedouin life and culture, about which he wrote in great detail. Dickson was born in 1881, so his experience is a generation later than Lady Anne's, but his account of Arabia is relevant for its similarity to hers.

aftermath, which occurred in Cairo and London.<sup>20</sup> Lady Anne eventually developed a persona that was rooted in England—she was never a rebel against her homeland—but was also truly cosmopolitan. The ancient concept of cosmopolitanism is based on the process of becoming and living as a citizen of the world. This process is based on two basic principles. One principle is a person's obligations to others; the other is the value and significance of human life. The philosophy of cosmopolitanism is relevant, even central, to Lady Anne's worldview.<sup>21</sup> Lady Anne remained rooted as a woman of England, but was very much a citizen of the world as well. Her cosmopolitanism mitigated the role her gender might have played in another woman of her time. Anne's worldview was also the antithesis of Said's Orientalist subjects, whose worldviews, while worldwide, were also Eurocentric and assumed the superiority of their home cultures.

Lady Anne embraced the concept of justice, liberty, and graciousness in any part of the world, with people of any race, nationality, or skin color. It was her rooted cosmopolitan worldview that set Lady Anne apart from many of her generation, and provided her with the ability to suggest a worldview that was three quarters to a whole century ahead of its time. Lady Anne Blunt's views on self-determination, lack of

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<sup>20</sup> Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 47. Cole provides an in-depth look at the parties involved in the Egyptian revolution; his book is an excellent companion to Lady Anne's journals.

Note regarding journals: Lady Anne's journals number over 300 in the British Library, and they are divided into categories such as pocket journals, which were more private, travel journals, and correspondence. The collection is extensive and, according to Anne, was intended to provide her daughter, Judith, with a record of events that occurred in Anne and Wilfrid's life.

<sup>21</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), xv. Appiah provides in-depth discussion of cosmopolitanism in different cultures and in different venues. His theme of the cosmopolitan being able to accept broad differences between cultures with equanimity and an egalitarian attitude make this concept applicable to Lady Anne. Appiah's book is recent, the concept is ancient, and Lady Anne fits in between. The term, "cosmopolitanism," has been used frequently in contemporary scholarship so that its meaning has arguably been compromised to fit a broad range of topics. In this dissertation, cosmopolitan refers to a person such as Lady Anne whose egalitarian worldview provides her with a natural ability to observe and appreciate different cultures and people without a sense of amusement or judgment, but with a consistent set of values.

prejudice about race or religion, and consistent effort for political liberty, were prominent topics of the entire twentieth century. Lady Anne was, in the truest sense, a citizen of the world, who was also rooted in her homeland. Her egalitarian worldview was tempered by the realization that her home culture not only did not always understand her views, but was sometimes hostile to the regions whose liberation she hoped to witness. It would have been no surprise to Lady Anne or Wilfrid to experience the way in which the western perception of the Middle East has evolved and the way in which western protagonists distort the region and its inhabitants. Lady Anne was aware of this aspect of her countrymen's attitude, and she was able to provide an alternate way of thinking and perceiving the Arab world and Egypt, most often through Wilfrid's publications, her own political efforts on his behalf, and personal conversations and correspondence.<sup>22</sup>

## **BACKGROUND**

Lady Anne Isabella Noel King Blunt (Lady Anne) belonged to a significant group of western women in the Victorian period who made ambitious journeys to the east.<sup>23</sup> Like many of her contemporaries, Lady Anne published a few of her travel journals from the Arab world, in which she maintained a knowledgeable, respectful, and pragmatic tone

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<sup>22</sup> Agatha Ramm, ed. *The Political Correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville, 1876-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 327. Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, of the Liberal Party, expressed initially his sympathy for the Egyptian Nationalist cause. Gladstone changed his position as the revolution progressed, providing Lady Anne with a deplorable example of opportunism in British international politics.

<sup>23</sup> See for example, Mary S. Lovell, *A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton*. Isabel Burton found fulfillment for her passion in her life with Richard Burton. For her, the east was about her marriage; her own relationship to the region was not her primary focus. This is one facet that separates Isabel Burton and Lady Anne Blunt. Also, Isabel burned some of her husband's manuscripts after his death because she feared their potentially damaging effects on future readers. Lady Anne believed in openness and a pragmatic respect for facts. See also James C. Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims* (New York: William Morrow, 1987). Simmons provides biographical sketches of some of the famous Victorian women travelers, including Lady Anne. His account focuses more on her travels, her horses, and her husband, than on Anne's political thought and activity.

to her work. The scope of Lady Anne's travels, and the voluminous collection of her journals, inspired her biographer, H.V.F. Winstone to compile a monograph about her life. Winstone's exhaustive research provides useful background for Lady Anne's well-known and complex family and the events of her life. His analysis of her activities and marriage focus more on Wilfrid's flaws and the unhappy aspects of Anne's married life, than on Lady Anne's intellectual thought and pursuits. Winstone also does not address Lady Anne's political activity.<sup>24</sup>

Born in 1837 in London, Anne's parents were William King, first Earl of Lovelace, and Augusta Ada Byron, daughter of the celebrated poet, Lord Byron, and his wife, Anne Isabella Milbanke-Noel.<sup>25</sup> Lady Anne's father, Lord Lovelace, hoped his daughter would "be a business-like young lady; and yet she must not be a busy body and she must be feminine and elegant in manner and appearance." Her mother, Ada, also hoped Annabella (Lady Anne's childhood name) would "be kind enough to be a metaphysician and a mathematician instead of a silly minikin..."<sup>26</sup> Ada was a brilliant mathematician whose work included formulas that provided the mathematical basis for

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<sup>24</sup> H.V.F. Winstone, *Lady Anne Blunt: A Biography* (London: Barzan, 2003). Winstone's exhaustive research focuses on the sensational and dysfunctional aspects of Anne's family, such as the famous accusation by Lady Byron's biographer, Harriet Beecher Stowe, in which Lord Byron is accused of having had an incestuous relationship with his half-sister. Lady Anne even took the release of Stowe's book in pragmatic stride. This dissertation does not explore the controversy over this aspect of Anne's background. Winstone's book is a useful reference but does not explore the nuances of Lady Anne's personality nor does it address her political activities.

<sup>25</sup> Rosemary Archer, "Blunt, Anne Isabella Noel, suo jure Baroness Wentworth (1837–1917)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), v. 6, p. 348. This entry applies to Lady Anne Blunt. See also Betty Alexandra Toole, "Byron, (Augusta) Ada [*married name* (Augusta) Ada King, countess of Lovelace] (1815–1852)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), v. 9, p. 344. This entry applies to Lady Anne's mother, Ada. The similarities of the names makes the notes potentially confusing.

<sup>26</sup> H.V.F. Winstone, *Lady Anne Blunt*, 22.

modern computer language.<sup>27</sup> Ada's mathematical research occupied much of her time, leaving relatively little time for her to spend with her three children, sons Ockham and Ralph, and daughter, Anne. As a result, Anne grew up in a solitary environment with her education consisting of private tutors in her father's home and in her Grandmother Byron's home. She and her brothers alternated between their parents and their grandmother, Lady Byron, widow of the famous poet. Anne developed an early drive to be productive in whatever she undertook, whether it was music, art, travel, politics, or horses. Her adult life and political activity reflected her grandmother's and her mother's sense of useful purpose and prescient ideas, which placed Anne in a forward-thinking, socially conscious category for her time. One of the families who visited Anne's mother and grandmother was the Nightingale family. The daughters, Florence and Parthe, were older than Anne, but Parthe and Anne became friends when Anne was young.<sup>28</sup> Anne later helped raise money for a hospital that Florence wanted to build.<sup>29</sup>

Lady Anne's mother, with whom she had an intermittent and distant relationship, died of cancer when Anne was fifteen, after several years of declining health. For the next few years, Anne spent much of her time with her grandmother, Lady Byron, whose lifelong philanthropy had centered on educational programs and opportunities for the poor.<sup>30</sup> Seriousness and intellectual curiosity, with a relatively non-religious background,

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<sup>27</sup>Betty Alexandra Toole, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, v. 9, p. 344. Ada was a well-known mathematician who published important articles and a book on mathematics. She also conceived, or helped conceive, the mathematical formulas and language that led to the invention of the computer. The official computer language of the United States Department of Defense was named 'Ada' in her honor. Ada's contribution to modern technology is acknowledged with a blue plaque on her home at 12 (formerly 10) St. James's Square, London.

<sup>28</sup> Winstone, *Lady Anne Blunt*, 68. Florence Nightingale and Ada, Anne's mother, were good friends.

<sup>29</sup> Winstone, *Lady Anne Blunt*, 85.

<sup>30</sup>Joan Pierson, "Noel , Anne Isabella , suo jure Baroness Wentworth, and Lady Byron (1792–1860)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), v. 40, p. 966. This entry applies to Lady Anne Blunt's grandmother, Lady Byron, wife of the poet. Lady

defined the Lovelace and Byron households and Anne reflected this unusual upbringing in her adult life. She was meticulous, mathematical, and detailed in her financial transactions and in her personal journals. She was also kind, pragmatic, and open-minded, the result of her liberal home education, with its focus on mathematics and the sciences, and its minimal religious influence. Lady Anne's later political sympathies reflected the humane outlook she learned from her philanthropic, liberal education, as well as the universal and English ideals of liberty and justice. Lady Anne was at once traditional and radical; sophisticated and complex; artistic and methodical; unique in her time and quiet in her behavior. She gradually incorporated these traits into what became her cosmopolitan, egalitarian worldview.

Anne's home education and eventual European education included mathematics, art, music, and languages. She became an accomplished violinist and later trained with renowned violinist, Joseph Joachim.<sup>31</sup> In 1864, at age twenty-seven, Anne purchased a 1721 Stradivari violin, evidence of her commitment to high quality and her effort to achieve perfection.<sup>32</sup> She painted prodigiously as well, with critic and art historian John

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Byron's main interest was developing education for the underprivileged, and for that purpose, she established Ealing Grove School. Lady Byron's attendance at the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 inspired her to also become involved in improving slum conditions. At the same time, she was interested in rights for women. See also H.V.F. Winstone, *Lady Anne Blunt*, 27. Lady Byron, with whom Lady Anne spent much of her childhood, instilled a spirit of concern for the unfortunate and disenfranchised in her granddaughter.

<sup>31</sup> H.V.F. Winstone, *Lady Anne Blunt*, 92.

<sup>32</sup> H.V.F. Winstone, *Lady Anne Blunt*, 92. See also, Dorothy Stein, *Ada, A Life and a Legacy* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1985), preface.

For more information about Lady Anne's now famous violin, see *The Strad*, August 2011, v. 122, n. 1456, 18. This article provides the details of the most recent sale of the "Lady Blunt Stradivari," which sold for \$15.9 million. The Japanese Nippon Foundation sold "one of the best-preserved Stradivari violins in existence," as a fundraiser for the victims of the tsunami and earthquake of 11 March 2011. Lady Anne would approve of her violin's being used to provide relief for the suffering.

See also, [http://www.stradivarisociety.com/acquire\\_a\\_great\\_instrument.php](http://www.stradivarisociety.com/acquire_a_great_instrument.php). (Accessed 14 July 2010). In 1971, a particularly fine Stradivari known as the "Lady Blunt" was purchased at auction by Robin Loh for the record price of just over \$200,000. More recently, the Lady Blunt violin sold to the Nippon foundation for \$10m. <http://www.violinadvisor.com/> (accessed 4 September 2010).



Ruskin as one of her tutors. As a linguist, Anne spoke several languages fluently: German, French, Latin, Italian, Spanish, and Swiss patois, perfected during extended tours in Europe. Later, she learned written and spoken Arabic, including local dialects.<sup>33</sup> Anne's commitment to high achievement extended to her horsemanship as well, and provided the basis of her expertise in searching for and acquiring the asil horses of the Arabian Desert and from the stud of Ali Pasha Sherif in Cairo, for her Crabbet Arabian Stud in Sussex, the first of its kind in the western world.<sup>34</sup>

Anne lived in Europe following the deaths of her mother and grandmother, the inheritance from whom provided the means for her to live abroad. She pursued art and music while there, with her linguistic ability providing her easy access to the artistic and social life of the cities. Anne met her future husband, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, when she was almost thirty years old and living in Paris. He was a few years her junior and was in Europe as a Foreign Office attaché. Wilfrid was a Sussex-born second son from a family of landed gentry. He had traveled widely with the Foreign Office and was known for his good looks and his aspirations as a poet. After several months of the social circuit in Europe, a long-distance correspondence and courtship, Lady Anne and Wilfrid married on 8 June 1869. Initially, Wilfrid's income was limited, so that Anne's inheritance funded the bulk of their early travels and eventual Arab horse purchases. Upon the death of his

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Lady Anne owned her Stradivari violin from 1864-1895. <http://www.cozio.com/Instrument.aspx?id=289> (accessed 5 September 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Lady Wentworth, *Authentic Arabian Horse* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), 73. Lady Wentworth, nee Judith Anne Dorothea Blunt, was Lady Anne and Wilfrid's daughter.

<sup>34</sup> Gulsun Sherif and Judith Forbis, ed, *Abbas Pasha Manuscript* (Mena: Ansata Publications, 1993). This manuscript was important to Lady Anne in her time, and it was recently translated and published in English. Abbas I Pasha (d. 1854) ruled Egypt as viceroy, and during his reign he collected the finest horses of the Arabian Desert in his studs in Cairo. The purpose of his collections was partly political, in that he attempted to finish the war on Wahhabis begun by Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim Pasha, who were his relatives and predecessors. For Lady Anne, this collection of horses represented the best horses the desert had to offer, and remnants of Abbas's vast herd were in the hands of his descendant, Ali Pasha Sherif, ancestor of *Abbas Pasha Manuscript* author, Gulsun Sherif, in Cairo.

elder brother, Francis, in 1872, Wilfrid inherited his family's estates and ancestral home, Newbuildings.<sup>35</sup>

During their first years of marriage, Anne and Wilfrid began to consolidate their life together in England. They both wanted children, and Wilfrid particularly wanted an heir. Anne's first two pregnancies ended in miscarriages until Judith, their only surviving child, was born in 1873. After Judith's birth, Anne lost three more children, one set of twins born prematurely, and a miscarriage that occurred in Algeria.<sup>36</sup> After recovering from the first of these devastating losses, Anne and Wilfrid pursued travels in England and in Europe, visiting friends and relatives. For both of them, local and European travel increased their desire to explore beyond their conventional horizons, eventually leading to their eastern excursions.<sup>37</sup>

Wilfrid's earlier years as an attaché with the Foreign Office had provided him with international political contacts, and Anne's famous grandfather and aristocratic heritage provided the couple with comparable social ones.<sup>38</sup> Anne's fluency in European languages was a bonus, making foreign travel easier and more comprehensible. Her linguistic background facilitated her future efforts to learn Arabic, both spoken and written, and made it possible for her to gain the cosmopolitan worldview that became the

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<sup>35</sup> Lady Wentworth, *Authentic Arabian Horse*, 74. Anne and Wilfrid built their home, Crabbet Park, on the Blunt lands in Sussex, approximately five miles from the Blunt ancestral home, Newbuildings. Newbuildings is a seventeenth century Charles II house behind which Wilfred Scawen Blunt is buried. The house reportedly still contains the William Morris tapestry and furniture that Blunt designed for it.

<sup>36</sup> LAB add mss 53851, 9 Janvier [January] 1874. Anne had two miscarriages during her first year of marriage in 1869; a baby boy born in 1870 died a few days after birth; twin girls born prematurely in 1872 died shortly after birth. Judith, her only surviving child, was born prematurely in 1873, but survived.

<sup>37</sup> Lady Anne's journals provide a chronicle of these journeys. Her Algerian travels have not yet been published, but they provide important information about Lady Anne's personal growth, her desert experience, her partnership with Wilfrid, and her political observations.

<sup>38</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries*, 7. Blunt's published diaries actually begin in 1888, but in this part, he reminisces about his time in the Foreign Office in Athens, Greece, in 1859. He lists a number of the colleagues with whom he served, providing an interesting context for his political life.

hallmark of her political career. Anne traveled in the east as no other western woman of her day and kept a detailed daily journal, which she and Wilfrid edited for publication. The early travel journals provided four volumes of seminal information about the barely accessible (to westerners) regions of the Arab world and Mesopotamia, its land, culture, people, and horses.<sup>39</sup> Both of these books, two volumes each, were based on Anne's journals and notes. While they were traveling in Algeria, Anne and Wilfrid discussed his wanting to become a published writer and poet. He and Anne discussed her writing poetry first because she was more likely, as Lord Byron's granddaughter, to attract the attention of a publisher. She declined on the grounds that she just could not write a poem. Wilfrid's editing of Anne's work was his effort to make her detailed, pragmatic journal more interesting to casual readers, possibly with the idea of establishing both of them as authors.

### **TRAVELS AND POLITICS**

Lady Anne and Wilfrid's eventual political activities personified a transition taking place in Britain's foreign policy from one of a largely international trading empire to a modern, colonial, administrative empire. The British Empire gradually colored the map of the world in red, or at least pink, as a symbol of its influence and power. Anne and Wilfrid traveled extensively in North Africa and the Arab world as this process began for Egypt. They visited Egypt before the Egyptian revolution of 1882 and the resulting

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<sup>39</sup> Lady Anne Blunt, *A Pilgrimage to Nejd* (London: John Murray, 1880), Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, ed. Also *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1879). Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, ed. Modern readers of Lady Anne's books have questioned, and even criticized, Wilfrid's editing of his wife's journals. His clarity in describing himself as an editor of their joint work in numerous publications precludes any accusations of his editing surreptitiously. Also, Anne gained confidence after these two books were published. Her journal writing became bolder and more polished than the earlier journals. Her political writing also became more incisive as she became more politically active and informed.

European “scramble for Africa.”<sup>40</sup> Just as Anne and Wilfrid found their way across North Africa, Syria, and Egypt, the latter’s political events were charting a unique route to its eventual imperial red. Egypt had been an Ottoman possession for four centuries, but operated with nominal independence from Constantinople.<sup>41</sup> Foreign interference, debt, and devastating capitulations reached a crescendo in Egypt after the cotton boom of the 1860’s, altering Egypt’s status as an independent colony. The Egyptian Question—how to navigate the politically sensitive relationships among the Ottoman government, Britain, the European powers, and the Egyptian financial crisis—became a political topic of conversation in Britain and Europe, with the reigning powers vying for dominance and influence in the land of the Nile and the Suez Canal.<sup>42</sup> With the drop in cotton values in the next decade—due largely to the ending of the American Civil War and significant American cotton on the world market—Egypt’s Khedive Ismail experienced crushing debt and eventual bankruptcy. Anne and Wilfrid witnessed, chronicled, and intervened in Anglo-Egyptian affairs as the consequences of international finance, global markets, and imperial obsessions collided in Cairo in 1881 and 1882.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries*, Part One title page. Blunt’s terminology here is identical to that of the future seminal study of this time period, by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1967), in which they analyze the “Scramble for Africa.” Since Blunt’s book was first published four decades before Robinson and Gallagher’s, it is possible that the latter, either wittingly or unwittingly, borrowed Blunt’s terminology.

<sup>41</sup> L. Carl Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East*, 75.

<sup>42</sup> L. Carl Brown, *International Politics*, 76. See also Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East*, 45.

<sup>43</sup> David Landes, *Bankers and Pashas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980). This book provides a detailed account of the European financiers who loaned money to the Khedive and to the Egyptian government, with usurious interest rates and public and private lands as collateral. It also shows the collaboration of Egyptian agents who later participated in activities on both sides of the British and Egyptian conflict. Landes’s book is focused on the financing of the Suez Canal, and does not continue through the Egyptian revolution, but his analysis of the relationship between financiers and Egypt’s leaders is critical to understanding the atmosphere in which the revolution occurred. See also Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution*, in which the complex society of Egypt and its involvement in the conflict is examined. Lady Anne’s journals, chronicling her personal experiences during this time, provide a complement to both of these works.

The process of British and other foreign financial interests' taking control of Egypt's debt obligations, behind the façade of the Khedive and the Sultan at Constantinople, laid a foundation of mistrust and opposition between Egyptians—Turks, native Egyptians, Turco-Circassians, Copts, Muslims, and various other religions and nationalities—and their government. This mistrust and opposition eventually erupted into an intensely disgruntled military and a dispossessed Egyptian official class. These forces of dissatisfaction collaborated to form profound resistance to the foreign exercise of power in Egypt in 1881. Resistance emanated from Egyptian nationalists and military leadership, led by Colonel Ahmed Arabi [also Araby, Urabi]<sup>44</sup>. The nationalists wished to abolish European financial control over Egyptian finances, draft a constitution, and form a representative parliament, for which they found allies among some of the British in Egypt, especially Lady Anne and Wilfrid Blunt. Due to their well-known depth of knowledge of Arabs and Egyptians, Lady Anne and Wilfrid found themselves central to the intense negotiations during the revolution among Turkey, England, and Egypt.

Knowledge of Egyptian politics was unusual for a westerner in Cairo in 1881 due to the complicated layers of political actors, foreign interests, and civilian elites. The British government and its officials in Egypt, as well as politically aware Egyptians, sought the Blunts' counsel and assistance as conduits of communication between their respective representatives. Anne and Wilfrid worked constantly, composing and translating correspondence between political leaders, and writing informative articles to be published in key newspapers in capital cities, such as Cairo, Alexandria, and

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<sup>44</sup>LAB Journals, add mss 53913, 14 December 1881. Urabi is the more correct spelling and pronunciation for this name, which is not of the same root as "Arab." Urabi signed his name in English as "Arabi," and both this spelling and "Araby" became interchangeable, as well as usual and accepted. In modern monographs, the more correct Urabi is usually found, but in Lady Anne Blunt's time, Araby was widely used, so it is used in this dissertation. Wilfrid published Arabi's "Autobiography" as an Appendix in his book, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*.

London.<sup>45</sup> Anne's activities in Egypt were relatively quiet, even unknown, compared to Wilfrid's. Wilfrid published widely in newspapers—fourteen of his articles and letters appeared in *The Times* in London between February and December in 1882. As official policy began to ostracize Blunt in the years following the revolution, he began to share his own correspondence with government officials to exonerate himself and Egyptian revolutionaries in an increasingly hostile environment. Edward Malet, Consul General in Cairo and personal friend of the Blunts, refuted Blunt's statements to *The Times*, in spite of the correspondence that supported it. Malet's actions, which were designed to exonerate Malet from blame in the Egyptian debacle as well, helped to create what became the official policy of marginalizing Wilfrid. Wilfrid eventually compiled his notes into his books, arguing for the liberty of Egyptian nationalists and against the increasingly duplicitous and repressive measures of the British administration.<sup>46</sup>

After the revolution, the British invasion, and the defeat of the National Party in Egypt, Lady Anne and Wilfrid remained committed to keeping the press and the government accounts of the events before, during, and after the invasion as forthright as possible. After exhausting their time and resources on behalf of the Egyptian nationalists and their supporters in Egypt and in England, Lady Anne and Wilfrid traveled again to Arabia. After this extended trip into Arabia, Anne and Wilfrid visited exiled Egyptian revolutionaries in Ceylon, and then went on to India where they focused their efforts on

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<sup>45</sup> *The Times*, 20 Feb 1882, p 8, no. 30435, col B.; see *The Times*, 2 August 1882, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907). This book is an account of Anne and Wilfrid's political activities on behalf of Egyptian nationalists. It is also Wilfrid's account of the actions of the government officials of England and France, the Khedival administration of Egypt, and the Egyptian National Party, as well as British administration in London. He published these books under his own name, but Anne's notes provided some of the factual information. Wilfrid continued this book with his next, *Gordon at Khartoum* (London: Stephen Swift, 1912), which was focused on British policy in the Sudan and the fate of Charles George Gordon. See especially, Alexander Scholch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!* (Oxford: St. Antony's, 1981), in which Scholch supports Wilfrid and his activities. Scholch is unusual in that he does not adopt the prevailing attitude toward Wilfrid.

helping Indians mitigate the effects of the Empire.<sup>47</sup> Anne and Wilfrid believed that forming a regional Muslim university would prepare more Muslim Indians for employment, higher education, and independent government. Anne and Wilfrid's return to England from India found them putting their same beliefs and theories to work for Irish Home Rule, while keeping in touch with their Egyptian friends in Cairo and Egyptian and Indian friends on the subcontinent.<sup>48</sup>

Lady Anne helped Wilfrid compile notes and prepare his account of the British invasion of Egypt as a book, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*.<sup>49</sup> The publication of this book sparked a series of responses from government officials who sought to clear themselves and their administration from the accusations it contained. The official responses were aimed at Wilfrid; they either belittled his participation in the negotiations in Egypt or accused him of interfering in government business.<sup>50</sup> This exchange of facts and accusations between Wilfrid and his detractors is widely known, but Anne's account of the same events provides important insights and information. Wilfrid had a much higher profile in these efforts than did Anne, since he stood for Parliament and his name appeared as author in all of the newspaper articles and most of their books, but she participated actively in her own right and was always an active partner in his political efforts and writings. Anne and Wilfrid's ideas and goals interlocked on a daily basis and Wilfrid's writings owed much of their substance to

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<sup>47</sup> LAB journals, add mss 59333. See also Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India Under Ripon* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), Elibron Classics, 2005. On the first page of the book, Wilfrid lists in his journal that he visited Downing Street (Gladstone was absent, but he visited the prime minister's secretary, William Edward, "Eddy," Hamilton); Wilfrid talked of his coming trip to Egypt, then to Ceylon to visit the Egyptian Nationalists, and then to discuss with the Indians the concept of Home Rule (a nod to Ireland). Wilfrid conducted his activities openly.

<sup>48</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 11.

<sup>49</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*.

<sup>50</sup> Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (New York: Macmillan, 1908), i., 280.

Anne's journals and to her copies and translations of their voluminous correspondence, both domestic and international, in English, Arabic, and French.<sup>51</sup>

British official response and Britons' individual responses to Lady Anne and Wilfrid's opposition to their national foreign policy varied from support, to uncertainty, to outright accusations of the Blunts as anti-imperialists or subversive traitors to the Crown. Historians since that time have varied in their treatment of Wilfrid, partly because of the accounts provided by Wilfrid's contemporaries in their published memoirs. Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer (appointed Consul-General of Cairo after the revolution, from 1883-1907), referred to Wilfrid's "poetic nature;"<sup>52</sup> Lord Northbrook, First Lord of the Admiralty, criticized Wilfrid's "interference" in Egyptian affairs; modern historians using such adjectives as "hedonist," "gadfly," or "eccentric."<sup>53</sup> Lady Anne escaped such abuse in the press or in historical records, perhaps because her published works contained geographic and cultural information rather than political opinion. Her unpublished journals tell her story, express her political sympathies and efforts, and reveal her quiet but steady influence on many of the political actors of the day, in Egypt, London, and every part of the Empire she visited.

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<sup>51</sup> LAB journals, various volumes. Lady Anne made entries in French and Arabic and some of her journals are almost exclusively in Arabic. She also included in her journals some of the key Arabic correspondence addressed to her. See also Lady Wentworth, *The Authentic Arabian Horse*, in which Lady Wentworth made several references to Lady Anne's fluency in European languages and Arabic.

<sup>52</sup> Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (New York: Macmillan, 1908), i., 255. Lord Cromer, nee Evelyn Baring, was a cousin of Thomas Baring, Lord Northbrook, First Lord of the Admiralty, both of whom were part of the Baring family, which had controlling interest in Baring Brothers Banks. The family banks had interests in Egypt and the Suez Canal Company.

<sup>53</sup> Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East*, 45. Here Cole uses Blunt's account as evidence of Auckland Colvin's early interest in a British invasion of Egypt. "There is something almost Nietzschean about Colvin's views as reported by Blunt." Cole also described Blunt as a "gadfly." This is an example of the paradoxical view of modern history toward Wilfrid, a view likely grounded in Cromer's own paradoxical account of him.



The process of discrediting Wilfrid began in earnest with the publication of Lord Cromer's memoirs, *Modern Egypt*, in 1908.<sup>54</sup> The memoirs, two volumes and more than 1,000 pages of Cromer's decades of imperial service, deal with Blunt in several, mutually exclusive ways. On the subject of Blunt's correspondence with Prime Minister Gladstone and his private secretary, Edward Hamilton, Cromer suggested that no one in the government correspond with Blunt at all, because any such correspondence might be "misinterpreted," in reference to Blunt's recent publication of *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*. Cromer wrote, "...in this case, we may have the advantage of knowing what Blunt has to say without corresponding with him. He will not hide his light under a bushel. You may feel sure that before long it will burn brightly in the pages of some magazine."<sup>55</sup> Cromer followed this suggestion with his own journal entry which reads, "I also, for Mr. Gladstone's information, replied at some length to Mr. Blunt's criticisms, but neither his letter, nor my reply, are of sufficient importance or interest to warrant their reproduction."<sup>56</sup> Cromer, in addition to publicly discrediting Blunt, also used the method of ignoring his adversary to marginalize him.

Another reference to Wilfrid in Cromer's memoirs refers to the investigation of the burning of Alexandria at the time of the British bombardment in 1882. Blunt's *Secret History* showed initial compelling evidence to implicate the Khedive in participating in the conflagration. Cromer responded in his memoirs, "After a careful examination of all the facts, I have come to the conclusion that this evidence is altogether valueless. It is unnecessary that I should give my reasons at length."<sup>57</sup> Ten pages later, Cromer quotes at

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<sup>54</sup> Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, 2v. Blunt's *Secret History* pre-dated Cromer's memoirs by a year.

<sup>55</sup> Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, i, 280.

<sup>56</sup> Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, i, 280.

<sup>57</sup> Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, i, 287.

length from Blunt's *Secret History* Appendix in regard to further evidence about the Alexandria fires. He begins by stating, "Mr. Wilfrid Blunt's testimony on Egyptian affairs generally is of very little value, but it may perhaps be quoted on this special point..."<sup>58</sup> Blunt had judiciously examined various pieces of evidence, both condemning and exonerating the Khedive's participation in the burning of Alexandria. In his initial investigation, Wilfrid believed that Arabi might have ordered the Egyptian army to set fire to the city as to subvert the advancing British forces. In spite of Blunt's loyal support of Arabi and the nationalists, his objective view of the evidence at that time caused him to consider the possibility that the nationalists burned their city in the wake of their retreat. Later, Anne and Wilfrid received sworn statements from Arabi and other witnesses that caused Wilfrid to reverse the conclusions he had published in the Appendix.<sup>59</sup> Lady Anne wrote:

Letters this morning from Ceylon and Egypt, former from Arabi enclosing signed and sealed statement (as to 11<sup>th</sup> June at Alexandria) that Omar Lutfi went to Cairo by special train on the ninth of June, had long interview with the Khedive and returned to Alexandria—that Ismail Kamil (the Circassian) and Omar Lutfi were present in the streets of Alexandria during the whole of the riot.<sup>60</sup> [Emphasis Anne's]

While the Blunts were willing to consider issues from various perspectives, Cromer was only willing to countenance, not to mention print, Blunt's opinion when it concurred with his own.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid's conflicts with their political and social contemporaries represented the discrepancy between their knowledge and experience, and official policy and its defenders. The political lives of Lady Anne and her husband focused on two basic

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<sup>58</sup> Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, i, 297.

<sup>59</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 537. See also, LAB journals, add mss 53922, 10 April 1883.

<sup>60</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53922, 10 April 1883.

themes: imparting their knowledge and cosmopolitan worldview of the indigenous people, religions, and cultures of the British Empire to their English compatriots in their motherland; and informing the British public of the travesties committed in the name of England by the British government in the process of claiming and colonizing the Empire.<sup>61</sup> Anne did not purposely seek a political career; by contrast, her inheritance and family status allowed her to assume the mantle of landed aristocracy and a life of horse breeding, travel, and leisure of her choice. Anne's political career evolved from her travels, on horseback and camelback, at the slow pace that such travel involved. It was the collection of these experiences, which provided the basis of her cosmopolitan persona and eventually consumed all of her time. Anne had a keen and rational sense of justice and truth, and a deep belief in the ability of English people to want to know the truth and seek justice. She understood the Arab world and did not believe that it was difficult for English people, or anyone else to comprehend or embrace.

Classic Bedouin society in Arabia, organized along republican lines, served as an early benchmark for what Anne believed the Arab world could achieve on its own, without Turkish administration, western interference, or subterfuge.<sup>62</sup> Anne's accounts offset the more common, lurid, view of the mysterious, veiled, Arab world that Victorian travelers and writers often published in the late nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup> Lady Anne made a lifelong career of trying to impart her rational, cosmopolitan knowledge and experience

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<sup>61</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries*, 1.

<sup>62</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53889, 10 December 1877.

<sup>63</sup> Lesley Blanch, *The Wilder Shores of Love* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), xviii. Blanch provides biographical sketches of some of the Victorian women who traveled in the Arab world in the nineteenth century. She chose her subjects for their passionate persona and the role of the Arab world in satisfying their overwhelming desires. Two of the women portrayed crossed paths with Lady Anne Blunt—Lady Jane Digby and Isabel Burton. Lady Anne and Wilfrid bought a house in Damascus near Lady Jane Digby and her husband, Medjuel al Mesrab. Wilfrid had served as an attaché in Argentina in the same office as Richard Burton, Isabel's husband. The Blunts and the Burtons met on several occasions.

to the British government and to the English public, but she did so on a relatively private scale. She hoped to mitigate the negative effects of British imperial aggression and manipulation in the east, first in Egyptian politics, then in Indian politics, and finally in Ireland with its religious-political milieu. Lady Anne's account also provides important material for critical inquiry into the official British and Egyptian versions of events; her account is often divergent from that of the British Blue Book account, especially on the subject of Wilfrid's position as liaison between the Egyptian nationalists and British officials in Cairo.<sup>64</sup> Lady Anne Blunt is important to study as a cosmopolitan, rational observer, whose worldview provides a modern-day endorsement of the importance of world history and what are now termed area studies as a basis for foreign policy. Her egalitarian, pragmatic, outlook implied a sense of optimism and hope, based on liberty and self-government for all civilizations of the world, and she saw the world as an interconnected system of viable, individual, nations, or cultures, which would be more productive in the world network if they were allowed to manage themselves.

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<sup>64</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913 and add mss 53914. *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Egypt No. 13 (1882)*. [C.3298] [C.3299]. "Further Correspondence respecting the affairs of Egypt." No. 1, 26 December 1881, Malet to Granville, in which Malet understates his own support of Blunt and of the National Party. He further suggests that Blunt and his "Arab friends" drafted a programme that the former claims is accepted by the National Party. Malet also states that Blunt's decision to send the programme to *The Times* is his own, and that Malet tried to discourage it. This is an example of the discrepancy between actual events and the Blue Book account, as reported by Lady Anne. [SHOULD THIS CITATION ACKNOWLEDGE THE ONLINE EDITION OWNED BY THE PCL??]

## **Chapter One: Victorian Travelers in the Arab World**

At first glance, reading about an aristocratic woman of the Victorian era who made ambitious travels, then returned to her homeland and published her journals, would seem ordinary, or at least something that had been done before. In fact, there were a number of nineteenth century men and women, individuals and couples, followed by early twentieth century ones, who traveled far and wide and left voluminous notes, papers, books, and journals with fascinating details, pictures, and stories of their adventures. Anthologies of many of these intrepid western travelers provide a broad look at their accomplishments and reveal the art, culture, societies, and romance of distant and strange lands and peoples. Of all of the ambitious western travelers to what was known at the time as the Near East, Lady Anne Blunt was unusual. She was the most widely traveled woman of her time, and the one who gained the most knowledge and understanding of the regions in which she traveled and learned. She and Wilfrid were also the most politically involved in both the region and in efforts to influence policy in London on behalf of native self-government. Lady Anne's accomplishments as a traveler, chronicler, and political advocate, of the Arab world, can be described in part by placing her in the context of her predecessors and contemporaries. Even those who followed her, attempting to trace a few of her footsteps, were unable to match the breadth and depth of Lady Anne Blunt's knowledge and travel.

**Lady Mary Wortley Montagu**, one of the pre-Victorian western women who traveled to the east, is well known, in part due to her journals and correspondence of the period. Lady Mary and her husband, Edward Wortley Montagu, lived in Turkey where he

served in the British embassy for just over a year (an unexpectedly short assignment).<sup>65</sup> The brevity of their time in Turkey belies the depth of knowledge Lady Mary gained from her tour of Turkey. One far-reaching result of her life in Turkey was her acquisition of the knowledge of smallpox vaccination. She was the first westerner to transport that important procedure to her homeland. Lady Mary's introduction of the smallpox vaccine to London during an outbreak of the disease in 1721 began with her vaccinating her five-year-old daughter, setting an example that virtually saved much of the population.<sup>66</sup>

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu provided an important link of travel, information, and medical knowledge between Constantinople and London in the early eighteenth century. She demonstrated a willingness to adapt foreign folk medicine to what was arguably considered, at least to the British, a more civilized and progressive society. Lady Mary provided an example of a Western woman who respected Turkey and Turkish people, and regretted having to leave Turkey when administrative changes in London forced her husband to return to England.

**Lady Hester Stanhope**, another of the early British women who traveled to distant and exotic lands, was known for being tall, a full six feet, and she was a skilled horsewoman.<sup>67</sup> Unusual in her time (1776-1839), Hester lived to lead. Her uncle, politician and eventual Prime Minister, Sir William Pitt, encouraged her talent for leadership and told her he wished he had generals and ministers with her gifts.<sup>68</sup> After his death and the death of her brother, Hester moved to the Turkish, then the Arab world,

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<sup>65</sup> Isobel Grundy, 'Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley (*bap.* 1689, *d.* 1762)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, v. 38, 754.

<sup>66</sup> Isobel Grundy, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>67</sup> James C. Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims; English Travelers to the World of the Desert Arabs* (New York: William Morrow, 1987), 39.

<sup>68</sup> James Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims*, 42.

with a stop in Cairo. There she gained an audience with the Egyptian viceroy, Muhammad Ali. They exchanged gifts and Lady Hester rode away on the Arabian horse the viceroy had given her. Hester soon adopted the language, dress, and culture of the Arab world, the male Arab world, and never returned to England. She wrote that the expectations and limitations of British society in her day were boring to her and she had no interest in living the life of an English lady. Once she found herself at home in the Arab world, she was happy to leave her roots, her dresses, and her Englishness behind.<sup>69</sup>

Lady Hester's most famous accomplishments occurred when she proceeded to enter Damascus, then Palmyra, at the head of an impressive caravan dressed as a man in elegant Arab clothes. Palmyra, at that time, was virtually inaccessible and dangerous. Warned by the pasha of Damascus that her journey would be precarious, Hester hired Bedouins as bodyguards. Hester's success in reaching Palmyra, along with other bold adventures, gained her near-goddess status among the Syrians. Hester fully enjoyed her anointed position of leadership.

Lady Hester found an abandoned house on a remote hilltop in the Druze country of Syria, later part of Lebanon, where she lived her latter years in her own small empire. She adopted all things Arab and garnered a mythical reputation in her fiefdom and as far away as in England. She survived a feud with the neighboring powerful Druze emir, Bashir, and ruled her dominions with an iron fist and sometimes tender generosity.<sup>70</sup> For Lady Hester, the Arab world was a place where she could satisfy her own yearning for adventure and leadership.

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<sup>69</sup> James C. Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims*, 55. See also, Norman N. Lewis, 'Stanhope, Lady Hester Lucy (1776–1839)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 52, 121.

<sup>70</sup> James C. Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims*, 78. See also, Norman N. Lewis, Stanhope, Lady Hester Lucy, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

**Lady Jane Digby**, born during the Georgian period (1807- 1881) but remembered as a Victorian traveler, was well bred, beautiful, and looking for love. She married a successful British politician, Lord Ellenborough when she was in her teens.<sup>71</sup> They divorced within a few years, launching Lady Jane's quest for the perfect husband or lover. After multiple marriages and lovers, including Ludwig I of Bavaria, she eventually stunned fashionable England when she left England, then Europe, for the east. Lady Jane, fluent in nine languages, found her perfect man in Syria. Her famous marriage to Medjuel el Mesrab, sheikh of the noble Mesrab tribe, brought both of them happiness and brought Lady Jane notoriety in her homeland. She and Medjuel agreed to divide each year, half spent with his tribe, and half in Damascus.<sup>72</sup> When they traveled with the al Mesrabs, Lady Jane learned and performed the traditional tasks of the Bedouin wife of the sheikh of the tribe. She wrote nothing but glowing reports about her feelings for Mejuel and did not mind the hard work, walking barefoot, or other inconveniences involved in being a Bedouin wife.

English visitors often made arrangements to meet Lady Jane when they traveled to Damascus, but few actually understood the life Lady Jane had chosen. Isabel Burton, wife of well-known explorer and author, Richard Burton, wrote insulting comments about Medjuel that displayed her ignorance about and insensitivity to Arabs, not to mention to her friend.<sup>73</sup> Lady Anne Blunt, who spent time with Lady Jane and Medjuel,

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<sup>71</sup> Lesley Blanch, *The Wilder Shores of Love* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 135. Lesley Blanch does apply some of the Orientalist assumptions to her biographical sketches of Victorian women who traveled, and loved, in the east, but her research and portrait of Lady Jane Digby is particularly relevant. Lady Jane was an aristocrat; in a sense, her social background was similar to Lady Anne's. Their lives were far different, but they eventually became good friends and neighbors in Damascus, in spite of a generation of age difference.

<sup>72</sup> Elizabeth Baigent, 'Digby, Jane Elizabeth (1807–1881)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 16, 146. See also, Lesley Blanch, *Wilder Shores of Love*, 135.

<sup>73</sup> James C. Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims*, 240.



liked and appreciated both of them and they developed a close bond of friendship and mutual respect. Lady Jane found personal peace and satisfaction in the Arab world, and contributed to the el Masrab tribe as a hard-working and generous member. Her relationships with the broader world were apolitical and personal. Lady Jane and Medjuel had been happily married for twenty-six years when she died of dysentery in 1881.<sup>74</sup>

**Sir Richard Burton** (1821-1890), was arguably one of Britain's most famous travelers and explorers of the nineteenth century. Burton's natural proficiency with languages earned him positions with the East India Company and the British military. He lived in the Indian province of Sind at the time of its British annexation and there began his quest for linguistic fluency. He passed seven language exams in India alone, but was credited with knowledge of over forty languages in his lifetime.<sup>75</sup>

Burton's familiarity with the East and its languages eventually led him to try to immerse himself in the culture in a convincing disguise. He successfully served British intelligence in Sind in this way, and his success encouraged him a few years later to consider posing as a Muslim Arab and traveling on a hajj to Mecca and Medina. Under the sponsorship of the Royal Geographical Society, Burton undertook his hajj by way of an extended visit to Egypt. While in Egypt, Burton perfected his disguise as a Sufi physician and his Arabic linguistic skills. His successful completion of the hajj was unusual for a westerner from a non-Muslim tradition. His journals became a popular book.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> James C. Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims*, 243.

<sup>75</sup> Mary S. Lovell, *A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton*. See also, Jason Thompson, 'Burton, Sir Richard Francis (1821-1890)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 9, 34.

<sup>76</sup> Jason Thompson, 'Burton, Sir Richard Francis (1821-1890)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 9, 34.

After well-known explorations of Harare, Somalia and the White Nile in Africa, Burton applied to the Foreign Office for a consular assignment in the Arab world, but his application was rejected. He suffered through several lackluster assignments before he finally earned a position as consul at Damascus in 1869. He used his ability to create an effective disguise, along with his command of languages, to roam the streets of Damascus to learn what people were thinking and planning. He was able to thwart sectarian conflict with such knowledge and created stability while he was in his post. His position only lasted two years, largely due to his criticism of Jewish moneylenders there, whom he refused to assist with debt collection. Burton's stand earned him opprobrium as anti-Semitic and caused the financial community to complain to the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office eventually reassigned Burton to Trieste, which was his final post.

Burton's voluminous writings became his most acclaimed legacy, particularly his translation and publication of *Arabian Nights*. His retention of the original Arabic erotic passages made Burton's version a bestseller, and earned him financial security. They also earned his book the disapproval of his wife. Burton commented on this unexpected success:

I have struggled for forty-seven years, distinguishing myself honourably in every way that I possibly could. I never had a compliment, nor a 'thank you', nor a single farthing. I translate a doubtful book in my old age, and I immediately make sixteen thousand guineas. Now that I know the tastes of England, we need never be without money.<sup>77</sup>

Burton's wife, Isabel, burned most of his papers after his death, an eerie sequel to a warehouse fire that had consumed most of his earlier unpublished work in 1861. Burton's relationship with the East satisfied his ambitions and provided an outlet for his linguistic

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<sup>77</sup> Jason Thompson, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 9, 39. See especially, Mary S. Lovell, *A Rage to Live*, 689.

and creative energy. His efforts largely contributed to Britain's imperial enterprise, with a dual mandate philosophy within an informal empire.<sup>78</sup> He and Wilfrid had known each other in the Foreign Office, but Wilfrid had the opportunity to view and experience empire from a different perspective. For Burton, the empire was the source of his career, and if he had thought of opposing it, he could not risk the loss of his employment. Richard Burton died at the consulate in Trieste on 20 October 1890, leaving a prodigious amount of literary work, notes, and papers.

**Charles Montagu Doughty** (1843 – 1926), a contemporary of Richard Burton but twenty years younger, was a lifelong aspiring poet and linguist, and a scholarly traveler in the east. Doughty began his Arab travels in Palestine in 1874, followed by an extended stay in Sinai in 1875. He studied Arabic, visited ancient wonders such as Petra, and made notes about these biblical and ancient sights.<sup>79</sup>

After his Sinai tour, Doughty planned to visit Meda'in Salih, the second capital of the ancient Nabataean kingdom. Originally disguised as a modest Syrian traveler, Doughty finally traveled under his own name and joined a pilgrimage caravan in 1876.<sup>80</sup> His initial plans to visit one sight evolved into a two-year journey of wandering and exploring in Arabia. Doughty wrote voluminous journals of his travels in Arab lands, which he eventually published with the title, *Arabia Deserta*. It remains a classic account

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<sup>78</sup> Lord Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Routledge, 1965). The philosophy of the Dual Mandate refers to the growing awareness of imperial responsibility toward the nations with which Britain had an imperial, colonial, relationship. Lugard's work occurred decades later than Burton's explorations and travels. The British Empire was setting the course, through explorers like Burton, for the events of the twentieth century that would contribute to Lugard's observations, theories and practices, which connects Lugard's work to Burton's.

<sup>79</sup> Charles Montagu Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (New York: Random House, no date), Introduction by T.E. Lawrence, 17; also Preface, 31. In addition, see James C. Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims*, 292.

<sup>80</sup> James C. Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims*, 295. See also, Stephen E. Tabachnick, 'Doughty, Charles Montagu (1843–1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, v. 16, 599.

of the Arab world in his time.<sup>81</sup> The journals describe in detail the natural beauty of Arabia, as well as the society, culture, and religion of Arabia's Bedouins and townspeople. The journals also contain harrowing accounts of Doughty's personal trials, risks, rewarding friendships, and his well-known and often contrary religious beliefs.<sup>82</sup>

Doughty's copious notes, locations of villages, tribes, riverbeds, oases, and other geographical and political observations provided intelligence information for the British government through both the First World War and the Second World War. The Royal Geographical Society awarded Doughty its prestigious gold medal in 1912, over two decades after the publication of his book.

While Doughty's contributions were and are important, his sentiments and loyalties with Britain and his home culture never wavered. Doughty traveled the world without becoming a citizen of the world but rather a scholarly observer of the world. In this respect, Doughty's approach to the Arab world was different from Lady Anne's or Wilfrid's. Much of his writing details events and how they affected him or how he saw them, but he did not apply his knowledge as a basis for solving foreign policy issues or of mitigating injustice.

**Gertrude Margaret Lowthian Bell** (1868-1926), was one of the later members of the distinguished group of intrepid Western travelers to the Arab world was. Gertrude was arguably the most famous British woman who traveled and wrote in the Middle East. Born into a wealthy family, Gertrude pursued excellence in her studies and earned a first

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<sup>81</sup> James Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims*, 325. See especially, Charles Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, T.E. Lawrence Introduction, 17-18.

<sup>82</sup> Charles M. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, 19. See also, James Simmons, *Passionate Pilgrims*, 319.

in history from Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, in 1888.<sup>83</sup> Following a tour of Europe, Gertrude visited Persia, hosted by her uncle, Sir Frank Lascelles, who served as British minister to Persia at that time. Gertrude fell in love in Persia, but her intended, the British embassy's first secretary, Henry George Gerald Cadogan (1859–1893), grandson of the third Earl Cadogan, had neither the reputation nor the background to find approval from Gertrude's family.<sup>84</sup> Cadogan died shortly after he and Gertrude suffered disappointment and separation, leaving Gertrude with a lifelong longing for the East as a refuge from the West.

Several years and many European adventures later, Gertrude returned to the Arab world to study archaeology. She began her studies in Syria, with the ancient sites of Petra, Palmyra, and Baalbek. Her writings about the ancient cities brought her literary renown and she also published her political observations of Ottoman administration. In 1909, Gertrude decided on a more ambitious project to chart the extant fortresses of the Roman and Byzantine periods along the Euphrates River. The book she published from this expedition she dedicated to Evelyn Baring, Earl Cromer, who had recently retired after more than two decades as British consul in Egypt.

By 1913, Gertrude was a new member of the Royal Geographical Society, and she planned an ambitious journey to commemorate her membership and to immerse herself in Arab culture. She traveled to Hail, Arabia, with the intention of meeting with Ibn Rashid, sheikh of the powerful Anazeh tribes based in that region. By the time she arrived in Hail, Gertrude missed Ibn Rashid, who was away dealing with his conflict with

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<sup>83</sup> Liora Lukitz, 'Bell, Gertrude Margaret Lowthian (1868–1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 4, 930. Liora Lukitz published the most recent biography of Gertrude Bell, utilizing primary sources and unpublished material for her book.

<sup>84</sup> Liora Lukitz, 'Bell, Gertrude Margaret Lowthian (1868–1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 4, 932.

Abdul Aziz, later known as Ibn Saud. Ibn Rashid's colleagues detained Bell for eleven days before finally allowing her to embark on the return trip to Damascus. Bell's six-month journey, from December 1913 to May 1914, was long and lonely since she was the lone European in her entourage of Arab guides and servants. She kept journals with the intention of publishing them, part of which she did three years later. The Royal Geographical Society awarded her a gold medal in 1918 for her journey and for the information her journals provided upon her return.<sup>85</sup>

In the meantime, Gertrude joined what became known as the Arab Bureau in Cairo, a division of British intelligence. Among the well-known framers of British Middle East policy from that time with whom Gertrude shared offices were T. E. Lawrence, Ronald Storrs, Kinahan Cornwallis, and G. P. Dawnay. During the First World War, Britain sought to achieve hegemony in the region as soon as Turkish power could be neutralized, and Gertrude would help formulate the policy, which would facilitate Britain's goals.<sup>86</sup>

By 1916, Gertrude had joined the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force under the leadership of Sir Percy Cox, who was chief political officer. As Cox's assistant, Bell provided valuable information on local events and tribal movements, much of which she sent back to Cairo for publication in the journals, the *Arabian Report* and the *Arab Bulletin*. General Stanley Maude captured Baghdad from the Turks a year later, and Gertrude became the oriental secretary for the new territory of Mesopotamia's British administration. Her job was to act as a liaison between the administration and the people

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<sup>85</sup> Liora Lukitz, 'Bell, Gertrude Margaret Lowthian (1868–1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 4, 32.

<sup>86</sup> Liora Lukitz, 'Bell, Gertrude Margaret Lowthian (1868–1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 4, 933.

of Mesopotamia. By this time, her knowledge and energy had earned her the respect of her colleagues and afforded her great influence in policy, even when her opinions conflicted with others in the same department.

In the complicated aftermath of the First World War, and the more complicated division of the Middle East among European powers, Bell played an important role in securing for Iraq some measure of independence and Arab administration under the auspices of British control. She was a deciding factor in the placement of Amir Feisal, son of the Hashemite Sherif Hussein of Arabia, on the newly created throne in Iraq. Feisal's reign lasted seventeen years.

Gertrude Bell's seminal role in the creation of modern Iraq after the First World War provided her with purpose and an occupation for nearly a decade. She made an effort to apply the informal imperial system in Iraq's new government, and to achieve benefits for Iraqi people within a dual mandate system. As Iraq evolved and British policy changed, Gertrude found herself isolated from the center of activity that she had known before. Having lost the men in her life whom she had loved most, Gertrude succumbed to bouts of depression, which contributed to her death in 1926 in Baghdad. Gertrude left a substantial endowment to found and maintain Iraq's national museum located in Baghdad.<sup>87</sup>

Gertrude Bell provided future generations with a glimpse of the Arab world through her unprecedented collection of photographs and detailed records of sights, events, people, and cultures, many of which disappeared soon after her death. Her political contributions remain the subject of some controversy in regard to their benefit to

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<sup>87</sup> Liora Lukitz, 'Bell, Gertrude Margaret Lowthian (1868–1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, v. 4, 934.

the region, but her efforts as a historical chronicler and archaeologist will remain important sources of information about an ancient and complicated land. Gertrude and Lady Anne met on several occasions and, despite their age difference, they liked each other. Gertrude had a similar affinity for the Arab world, but she believed in the British Empire as a cause for the greater good, a sentiment that Lady Anne had discarded by the time Gertrude was ten years old.

### **LADY ANNE'S LEGACY**

During Lady Anne Blunt's time, Cairo was a popular city for British subjects, for its exotic location, its active social life, and Egypt's politically strategic position with the Suez Canal and the trade routes to India. Like Cairo, other cities in the region, such as Constantinople, Jerusalem, or Beirut, hosted European or British travelers who either had business in the region or the desire to experience a taste of the eastern world. The British Empire was consolidating its position in the world and its subjects who had the means ventured to see some of its parts. Most of these travelers, like Lady Hester or Lady Jane, had either suffered loss or boredom at home and searched the exotic lands for some form of solace or adventure.<sup>88</sup> For other casual travelers, the exotic lands were also interesting in their own right and provided an internship in foreign history and politics or art and archaeology to the active-minded men and women born in England. For a woman in a later period such as Gertrude Bell, the region was still an escape from England and from heartache, but was also accessible to her as a research laboratory where she could collect critical information and make lifelong contacts to assist her country in its quest for knowledge of the region and hegemony in it.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Lesley Blanch, *Wilder Shores of Love*, Introduction. Blanch explains her choice of subjects for her book. She chose women who consciously left their homeland for the east to pursue their passion and love.

<sup>89</sup> Liora Likutz, Gertrude Margaret Lowthian Bell.



The distinguishing aspects of Lady Anne Blunt's travels, journals, and activities are the reasons she ventured into the east and the career she inadvertently carved out of her activities there. Lady Anne first ventured into the east as a casual traveler on her extended honeymoon. She was an accomplished horsewoman who sought to find the source of the asil Arab horse and to discover the elements of his homeland that made him unique.<sup>90</sup> The Arab horse was the progenitor of the modern Thoroughbred, a breed of racehorse developed in England a little over a century earlier. Anne's Milbanke ancestors bred Thoroughbreds at their prominent Milbanke Stud in the Newcastle region. An accomplished horsewoman in her own right, Anne hoped initially to improve modern English Thoroughbreds with an infusion of desert blood a century after it first created the modern era's most sensational race horse.<sup>91</sup> Once she entered the desert and its culture, she and Wilfrid made the decision to try to extend the homeland of the desert horse to England.

In the process of traveling to and through the tribal regions of North Africa, Syria, and Arabia, Anne found herself; she discovered that she could use her knowledge of indigenous people, whom she regarded with the same set of values with which she beheld her own countrymen, to help them find their own liberty in an increasingly imperialist world. Unlike Lady Hester or Lady Jane, Lady Anne never viewed the east and its people as simply exotic, nor did she lose sight of her homeland or abandon her native culture.

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<sup>90</sup> Lady Wentworth, *The Authentic Arabian Horse* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), 72. See also, Donna Landry, *Noble Brutes*.

<sup>91</sup> Donna Landry, *Noble Brutes*. The development of the Thoroughbred derived directly from the importation to England of Arab horses from North Africa and Syria. Lady Anne visited the tribe that produced the famous Darley Arabian, arguably the most important of the three progenitors of the Thoroughbred. Landry details the profound effect these importations had on English culture; Lady Anne embodies that effect. Lady Anne added significantly to the legacy of the eastern horse's impact on English culture by founding the Crabbet Arabian Stud, whose produce founded Arab horse-breeding dynasties around the world for the next century.

Lady Anne adopted Arab ways at times, learned to speak and write the language, and learned to understand the culture, in which she found peace, hospitality, and comfort amid the hardships of travel.<sup>92</sup> Lady Anne traveled much more extensively in the Arab world than did any of her predecessors, and with more diverse encounters. She was also more widely traveled than Gertrude Bell, who began her journeys more than three decades later.

Lady Anne established a semi-permanent residence in Egypt as a gateway to the Arab world.<sup>93</sup> During the hot Egyptian summers, Anne and Wilfrid lived at Crabbet in England, but maintained the garden and stud farm in Egypt, Sheykh Obeyd, as a predominantly winter respite. During the last two years of her life, Lady Anne lived permanently at Sheykh Obeyd due to the travel restrictions imposed by the First World War. Lady Anne worked tirelessly on behalf of diverse indigenous populations, with no benefit to herself. She formed lasting relationships in the east, with men and women. She learned how they thought and why they thought or acted as they did. She never held an official position, did not try to govern anything or lead any groups; she did not pursue personal satisfaction or unrequited love in the Arab world. Anne found a problem that needed solving: foreign, particularly British, interference in Egyptian politics, and she sought to solve the problem with an equation of knowledge, efficiency, and hard work. Over time, Anne developed the worldview that gave her the distinction of being a rooted cosmopolitan. Neither Lady Hester nor Lady Jane, for example, developed such a

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<sup>92</sup> LAB journals. Lady Anne's comments about feeling at home in her tent in the desert, or among bedouin tribes, are numerous, and are found in many of her travel journals. She even made such a comment upon Wilfrid's and her arrival in Colombo in 1884, when the Indian Muslim community there received them with a flotilla of boats in the harbor.

<sup>93</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, February 1882. Lady Anne and Wilfrid purchased Sheykh Obeyd, their Egyptian winter home, just before leaving Egypt during the revolution of 1882.

worldview. These two women did not adopt projects aimed at the foreign policy of their home government. In a sense, both Lady Hester and Lady Jane used the Arab world as an escape and as a place to find a renewed sense of belonging, of community. Gertrude Bell began her career as a traveler and as a volunteer, but eventually served in official capacities and provided intelligence to her home government for British interests. Lady Anne always worked for the interests of the indigenous people and for their right to self government and organic law, or law created by and for indigenous people. In both the context of her time and from a historical perspective, Lady Anne Blunt was and is a unique character who found a useful purpose in working to improve the world in which she lived and traveled.

Lady Anne Blunt represented the antithesis of the concept of a “white man’s burden,” whether in Egypt, India, or Arabia.<sup>94</sup> She did not assume the superiority of English culture, language, and religion that would supposedly be benevolently bestowed upon the fortunate natives who received it.<sup>95</sup> She believed in the essential right and competence of native people with their cultures, languages, and religions to order their own societies and she believed that England could and should respect native liberty, encourage it, and reap the benefits of societies who were satisfied with their association with liberal England, whether commercially, politically, or socially. Two of Lady Anne’s,

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<sup>94</sup> Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden: The United States & The Philippine Islands, 1899.” *Rudyard Kipling’s Verse: Definitive Edition* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1929). Kipling’s famous poem had the lasting effect of its title being used to describe the role of the Eurocentric, Orientalist, imperialist white nations in their civilizing missions among the nations of darker-skinned people.

<sup>95</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, “Introduction,” *Historiography, Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. Robin W. Winks, v. V (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5. Thomas Macaulay’s famous “Minute on Education” assumed the superiority of British culture, but benevolently encouraged its being shared with a portion of the native population of India, or any other colony, to provide a class of intermediary workers and middle managers to support the British administration. The ultimate goal was “progress toward order and rationality,” but not true self-government such as that which Anne believed would be most beneficial for Egyptians (and later for Indians, too).

and Wilfrid's, greatest disappointments were that the British government could and would behave as the financial interests of its benefactors would dictate, with little regard for ideals of liberty and justice, and that the English people would allow it to proceed unfettered, happily ignorant of the consequences. Neither Anne nor Wilfrid had the perspective to understand the official British mind of their day, which was a "shrewd blend of altruism and self-interest... [which] represented the permanent political instinct of British colonial policy."<sup>96</sup>

Unlike many of her contemporaries, whether travelers or government officials, who might be considered classic Eurocentric Orientalists, Anne established personal relationships in the Arab world that were grounded in reciprocity and appreciation for character and culture, rather than from a perspective of imperial superiority or simple curiosity. These relationships brought about a shift in her worldview toward that of a true cosmopolitan who was rooted in her homeland. The time Anne and Wilfrid spent with tribes and their horses helped define their perspectives toward Arab people, their society, and their culture, providing the catalyst that helped define their egalitarian worldview and their politics.

Lady Anne Blunt and Wilfrid were rooted—that is, committed and generally comfortable—in their British homeland. Both of them wrote about their attachment to their heritage and traditions, particularly the British legacy of civil and political liberty. When they were in England, they lived on their English estates or at their home at number ten St. James Street in London. Their sojourns into the deserts and the cities of the east, into the countryside and cities of Algeria, Arabia, Egypt, and India, and later into the villages and towns of Ireland, gave this couple a truly cosmopolitan element. After

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<sup>96</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, Introduction, *Oxford History of the British Empire*, V, 6.

buying property and a house outside Cairo, Anne and Wilfrid divided their time between England in the summer, and their horse farm in Egypt during the winter, outwardly behaving as traditional landed aristocrats. As “rooted cosmopolitans,”<sup>97</sup> the Blunts were able to envision the possibilities of liberty for the indigenous citizens of the far-flung British Empire. As their political standing increased, Lady Anne and Wilfrid realized that some of their countrymen and their political adversaries did not share their cosmopolitan experience and were often unable or unwilling to share their vision, preferring a more pessimistic worldview and its concurrent obsession with security. Lady Anne’s worldview articulated the contemporary conflict of her day, which was the disparity between British colonial thought in empires with white populations as opposed to those with dark-skinned populations in the east.<sup>98</sup> Modern scholarship has ascribed various reasons and descriptions to this tendency, most notably the term, “Orientalism,” suggesting that westerners, with the singular exception of Wilfrid Blunt (the author did not know of Lady Anne’s writings), viewed the Arab world, with fear and hostility.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006). Appiah is the Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy and the University Center for Human Values, Princeton University. Cosmopolitans originally referred to “citizens of the cosmos” in the fourth century BC. (xiv) They represented a philosophy that rejected the concept of citizenship in the context of a community, but saw citizens as a part of a universal cosmos. Cosmopolitans declared a loyalty to all of humankind as opposed to loyalty to a limited community. (xvi) Appiah sought to place cosmopolitanism into a simpler context that allowed citizens to retain a sense of community while embracing the value of the larger community, the cosmos. This modern concept of cosmopolitanism, applied to the Blunts, includes their sense of being rooted in their home community, Britain, while being citizens of Egypt and of the world.

<sup>98</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, “Introduction,” *Oxford History of the British Empire*, V, 10. Sir John Seeley questioned the incompatible concepts of liberty and despotism and their co-habitation in the British Empire. Seeley asked how the Empire could exercise despotism in Asia and in the Muslim world, while promoting freedom of thought and religion in a colony like Australia. Seeley’s hard questions about empire mirror those asked by Lady Anne Blunt.

<sup>99</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 237. It is important to note that Said expressly excluded Blunt from his thorough study of western travelers in the Orient. There is significant debate about Said’s theory, but the point here is the position that the Blunts hold as exceptions to the Orientalist rule.

Wilfrid Blunt's prolific writing earned him a distinct reputation, first as a scholar of the Arab world, then as a liberal politician, and later as an ardent anti-imperialist. Behind much of his own work were the writings of his wife, Lady Anne, who provided the detailed daily record of a lifetime of events, dramatic and mundane, domestic and foreign, artistic and political. Anne kept this record largely for her daughter's benefit, so that Judith would know what happened during her parents' long absences and major political events. Anne also recorded detailed information about the Arab horses she saw, purchased and bred in Arabia, Egypt, and around the world, and in the process, made varied and important contributions to a historical record of the time. Anne and Wilfrid shared ideas, thoughts, and experiences, and Anne's account is inclusive of Wilfrid's but much broader in its scope. With a cosmopolitan worldview, Lady Anne Blunt provided a record of world events, a catalog of travels, and a lasting equine breeding program as a legacy for the generations who followed her.

Lady Anne Blunt's journals also provided a prescient look toward the political thought of the future, with self-determination, racial equality and integration, and religious tolerance as pillars of her own philosophical thought. Lady Anne's worldview is relevant as a modern study because her political experiences provide stark reminders of the potential power of internal economic forces and special interests, over the power of a cosmopolitan, optimistic, worldview, even when it is firmly rooted in a tradition of liberty and justice. Generations after Lady Anne's death, her homeland and her Egypt collided in a test of wills in which the British political descendants of the Egyptian

invasion and occupation presided over their empire's last gasp next door to the Suez Canal. "[British Prime Minister Anthony] Eden was the last British Prime Minister to believe that Britain was a Great Power and the first to confront a crisis which proved beyond doubt that she was not."<sup>100</sup> Lady Anne had written, in 1884, "All these things I have heard make me sad. It cannot with truth be said that the British Empire... was "founded on justice"—and unless it repents and mends its ways while yet there is time surely the whirlwind must burst over it and shatter it."<sup>101</sup> The whirlwind had burst upon the British Empire in the sands of the Sinai, seven decades after Lady Anne and her husband tried to mitigate the unseen forces of conflicted interests and scrambles for an imaginary status quo.

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<sup>100</sup> *Sunday Times*, 16 January 1977.

<sup>101</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 17 January 1884. Lady Anne wrote this in reference to her trip to India at that time, but it was written in the aftermath of the Egyptian revolution, and illustrates the connection she made between the two pillars of the British Empire in the east.

## **Chapter Two: Lady Anne and Wilfred's Travels in the East**

Lady Anne Blunt developed her sense of an interconnected world through her long travels, in a variety of lands, people, and cultures. Her travel experience, with her husband, Wilfrid, gave her the practical tools to improve her skills so that each trip became easier to plan and to manage. As the travel details became less daunting, Anne's opportunities to document her own thoughts and observations increased.<sup>102</sup> Anne and Wilfrid's early travels to the remote lands of Turkey, Algeria, and Arabia, provide a chronicle of Anne's development of social and political thought. Her early journals during this period reflect an interested observer of people, geography, and horses, with a slight recognition of indigenous political structure and imperial influence. Politics during the early travels were usually related to travel issues. In Algiers, Anne wrote about obtaining licenses to purchase and own guns for their extended journey. The bureaucratic process involved in acquiring the permits was inefficient and time-consuming. Anne wrote, "No wonder if in troublous times France comes to grief, with such wheels within wheels of botherations and vexations for each simple thing."<sup>103</sup> These early travels taught Anne and Wilfrid important details of Bedouin culture, local Arabic dialects, and the

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<sup>102</sup> This point is important because reading Lady Anne's journals during her North African, early Syrian, and Arabian travels, does not reveal the depth of political observation that her later journals reveal. When taken as a whole, Lady Anne's personal development is apparent as the depth of her writing becomes greater and more confident. Her confidence increases dramatically after the Arabia trips and through the Egyptian revolution.

Geographical note: Anne refers to Turkey throughout her journals, never distinguishing between Anatolia, the Ottoman territory of Turkey, or any other more accepted reference to that region. This dissertation has maintained Lady Anne's terminology in an effort to remain faithful to her perspective.

<sup>103</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53852, 2 January 1874. At this time, Lady Anne's annoyance with empire extended to foreign ones, but laid the foundations for her eventual disappointment and criticism of her own nation's empire.



realities of traveling in the near eastern, North African, Arab world.<sup>104</sup> Climate, provisions, and geography posed significant difficulties at times, as well as finding reliable horses and camels for transportation and baggage. On a political level, in Turkey, Anne and Wilfrid witnessed beleaguered peasants and declining agriculture, a result of Ottoman policy in the Turkish countryside as well as Ottoman military needs for foreign and border wars.<sup>105</sup> Also in Turkey, Anne distinguished firsthand the difference between Turkish people and the Turkish government. It was during this trip that Anne first realized what she and Wilfrid would term the “extreme misgovernment” of the Turks in Arab lands, contrasted with the “happiness of the still independent tribes.”<sup>106</sup> This sentiment gradually developed into a view of imperial misdeeds at the expense of natives. Anne saw conscripted soldiers driven in chains from villages in Syria and Mesopotamia [Iraq] to fight for the Turks against the Russians. Arab anger at this injustice touched Anne’s sympathies and her egalitarian sense of justice, and provided the foundation for her future efforts to achieve liberty for Egypt.<sup>107</sup> Anne and Wilfrid made a distinction between the Turks of Turkey, whom they appreciated and respected as people, and the Turk as an Ottoman oppressor in foreign provinces, where he was “too often a rapacious tyrant.”<sup>108</sup> In the same way, they saw the purity of the Algerian Arabs’ unspoiled nomadic and settled culture as well as the French colonial-inspired urban culture of the towns in Algeria. The Algerian urban culture reflected the corruption of Arabs’ traditional values as they positioned themselves to benefit from French colonial rule.

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<sup>104</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, 21 February 1874, f.9. In this journal, Anne records some of their travel mistakes, such as leaving a load of wood behind due to having to reload a camel pack; she also relates the hospitality and generosity of an “Arab gentleman” who later gave them wood with which to cook.

<sup>105</sup> Wilfrid Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), 27.

<sup>106</sup> Wilfrid Blunt, *Secret History*, 27.

<sup>107</sup> Wilfrid Blunt, *Secret History*, 27.

<sup>108</sup> Wilfrid Blunt, *Secret History*, 28.

Anne began to formulate her impression of imperialism as she witnessed what she viewed as its detrimental effects to indigenous people under Turkish and French administrations.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid's quest for purebred Arab horses in their historic homeland provided a purpose for them to travel, via local horses and camels, and to observe and learn the culture and language of tribes from North Africa to Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Sinai, Arabia, and Persia. The Blunts' travels to India involved their usual horse and camel entourage, combined with ocean travel. They viewed and evaluated Arabian horses during their travels in India, at the racetracks and at private studs.<sup>109</sup> The quality and status of Arab horses in these lands provided a lens through which to view Arab culture and the interaction of westerners and Arabs.<sup>110</sup> A few travelers and professional scholars had previously visited portions of the Blunts' routes in the Arab lands and India, but Anne, as well as Wilfrid, was positioned to acquire greater depth of knowledge than other travelers due to her keen knowledge of horses. Anne was in a unique position: she was the first western woman to travel into the interior of Arabia; she was the second westerner (along with Wilfrid) to make such an ambitious journey under her own identity; she was the first to travel so widely without having ulterior political or financial motives; and she had an innate, egalitarian, cosmopolitan worldview.<sup>111</sup> It was Anne's cosmopolitan worldview, with its inherent optimism, that

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<sup>109</sup> Word clarification: the term, "studs," in this context, is plural and refers to farms that breed horses.

<sup>110</sup> The manner in which horse traders represented or misrepresented Arab horses provided an indication of what the western market wanted from the desert. Certain strains, or families, of horses were more sought after, and Anne was often able to discern misrepresented horses in Baghdad or India.

<sup>111</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, xvi – xx. As previously discussed in fn. 5, Anne represented a cosmopolitan, a citizen of the world, who was also comfortable, hence "rooted," in her homeland.

See also, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, 15. Regarding Anne and Wilfrid's identity: Charles Montague Doughty had traveled to Hail under his own name, but he had begun his journey in disguise.

allowed her to observe and learn without judgment, simple amusement, or the desire to change those from whom she learned.

In addition to gaining knowledge of the indigenous people that she encountered, Anne saw firsthand the operations of the empires of France, Turkey, and England during her travels with Wilfrid in North Africa, Arab lands, and India. She witnessed all facets of imperial government, from the inefficient to the efficient, and from benign to malevolent. While she maintained her English roots and never adopted the mantle of a native, Anne found aspects of native dress and culture more practical than her own while she traveled in the east. She moved as easily between cultures as she did between languages, an attribute that Anne initially took for granted, but eventually realized was unusual. Above all, for a long time Anne held onto her belief that English people were ultimately committed to the ideals of liberty and justice for all people and that once informed, they would exert pressure on the English government to observe such rules in policy and conduct with the eastern nations.<sup>112</sup>

Anne and Wilfrid followed their Turkish trip with a more ambitious trip to Algeria later in 1873 and early 1874. In Algeria, Anne and Wilfrid learned how to travel in the Arab world. They learned the essential elements of the local dialect of the Arabic language, procuring suitable horses to ride, camels to pack, and equipment to carry. They learned about hiring guides and helpers along the way; how and when to give and receive gifts; and suffered the consequences of hunger and thirst when their guides failed to manage their supplies. Anne and Wilfrid experienced the hardships of radical weather

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Lady Anne and Wilfrid approached the sheikhs of the desert as “persons of distinction” from England who wished to visit their counterparts in the desert. Doughty abandoned his disguise and hoped for mercy from the Arabs, which he generally received.

<sup>112</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 17 January 1884; also, add mss 53961. There are numerous mentions of liberty and justice for native, or indigenous, people, throughout Anne’s journals. She believed that the English simply needed to be informed.

patterns of wind, rain, cold, snow, and drought. It was in Algeria, in a tent, where Anne suffered the pain and devastation of her third miscarriage, while Wilfrid also suffered the loss of his third child.<sup>113</sup> Algeria was a land of hard lessons, lovely scenery, history, and hospitable Arab people.

Algeria's membership in France's burgeoning territorial collection (later considered an empire) gave Anne and Wilfrid the opportunity to experience French colonialism and its effect on Algerian people. They noticed the difference in Algerian people who lived in the countryside and maintained traditional ways and culture, and those who lived in cities and adopted attitudes that would advance them with French colonial officials.<sup>114</sup> The Blunts initially criticized French colonial rule, just as they had criticized Turkish rapacity in Turkey, citing the corrupt influences that urban areas reflected, as notables sought to win favor and influence with the colonial administrators. These early trips did not take Anne and Wilfrid into areas of British influence, so for a time they remained uncritical of British influence in the regions. Britain's efforts toward empire seemed almost invisible to them during their early travels. From Anne and Wilfrid's writings, it is evident that the realization that England's colonial rule mirrored that of other nations' colonialism dawned slowly—but surely—as they traveled closer to the areas of greater British influence, such as Syria and Egypt. Egypt was eventually the scene of Anne and Wilfrid's awakening to imperial influence and intrigue.

The first two trips to Turkey and Algeria whetted Lady Anne and Wilfrid's appetite to delve deeper into the Arab world in pursuit of the asil Arabian horse<sup>115</sup> and its

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<sup>113</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53851, Janvier [January] 9, 1874.

<sup>114</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, 7 February 1874, f.25.

<sup>115</sup> Word clarification: the term, "asil," means "pure" in Arabic, and is used to denote Arabian horses of the desert that reflect generations of purebred breeding without the influence of cross-breeding with horses of

caretakers, the Bedouin Arabs. After Algeria, Anne and Wilfrid decided that the Arab world of Syria would provide them with a door to Arabia and the great Anazeh tribe, reportedly the premier horse-breeding tribe of the region.<sup>116</sup> After an extensive stay with British Consul James Henry Skene and his wife in Aleppo, Anne and Wilfrid embarked upon their most ambitious travels into the Arab world. While in Aleppo, Anne made arrangements by correspondence with loved ones and caretakers in England for her lengthy absence—corresponding with Judith’s caregivers, making arrangements with bankers for money and overdrafts during their long journey, and leaving instructions for the care of the animals and property at home. Anne also secured expert Jewish tent-makers in Aleppo and interviewed potential guides who could navigate their way to Arabia, specifically to Mesopotamia first. She met with local pashas and dragomans, and listened to varying accounts of travel possibilities on the Euphrates. The Blunts’ hosts, the Skenes, above all, provided Anne and Wilfrid with quality information about tribes, culture, and decorum in the desert.<sup>117</sup> After gleaning information, supplies, and guides in Aleppo, Anne and Wilfrid set out for their first journey toward Arabia in 1877 and 1878.

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other bloodlines. The indigenous horse of North Africa is often a Barb, which can have some Arabian characteristics, but is usually distinguishable for an experienced horse person.

<sup>116</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 10 December 1877.

<sup>117</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 10 December 1877. James Henry Skene, “Mr. Skene,” is a prominent figure in Anne’s diaries in the late 1870’s. The Blunts owed much of their early success with the Bedouin tribes to Skene’s knowledge and connections.

Anne and Mr. Skene discovered that they were distant relatives—fourteenth cousins—through a connection with the Lovelaces. Anne gave a short biographical sketch of Mr. Skene: “Mr. Skene is over sixty and served five years in the army, 73<sup>rd</sup> foot. After that he was at Cephalonia and Zante from about 1845 to 1848. In 1852, he was made vice Consul at Constantinople and in 1855 Consul at Aleppo. He was sent to help in the organization of irregular cavalry in the same year and was General Vivian’s secretary. General Vivian commanding the Turkish contingent—so that Mr. Skene saw a great deal of the Crimean War.” See also, LAB journals, add mss 53889, 11 Dec 1877, followed by lovely water color 12 Dec, picturing the Skene’s house.

Dragomans were employees of foreign consulates whose jobs were intended to facilitate the visits of their foreign nationals to the host country. They were usually prominent Christians or Jews, and enjoyed certain privileges, such as tax benefits. Dragomans often had the reputation for using their offices for personal gain.

Mesopotamia, part of the northern area of the greater Arabian region, represented an ambitious journey in itself. Anne and Wilfrid made important contacts during this first trip and vowed to return and travel deeper into Arabia—into the heart of the Nafud Desert and its horse breeding area of Nejd—the following year, in search of the finest horses and their caretakers, the Bedouin.

At the end of 1878 and early 1879, Lady Anne and Wilfrid finally launched the trip they worked so hard to plan and that the previous years of travel prepared them to make. They made their way on horseback and with camels across the Nafud and into the Nejd, the heart of Arabia and its acclaimed nomadic horse breeding clans. They camped in the desert as they searched for the nomadic tribes with horses. They lodged at an inn in Joubba, Anne's favorite place in Arabia, and one of the locations of ancient cave-drawings, or petroglyphs. In Hail, Anne and Wilfrid stayed in the city as guests of Muhammad Rashid, head of his clan and rival of the Saudis. Anne and Wilfrid had studied the travels of their few predecessors and vowed to travel under their own names rather than disguising themselves as Arabs as previous western travelers had done.<sup>118</sup>

Traveling without disguise was an ambitious effort in 1878. The few western travelers who had visited the remote regions of Arabia before had either done so on behalf of a benefactor who wanted horses, such as Italian horse dealer, Carlo Guarmani in 1868, or had served a government, such as British Orientalist and diplomat, Richard Burton in 1853.<sup>119</sup> Both men had assumed the disguise of Arabs, using their command of

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<sup>118</sup> David George Hogarth, *Penetration of Arabia*, 254. See chapters three and four for a fuller explanation of the significance of the Blunts' travels.

<sup>119</sup> Mary S. Lovell, *A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton*. Richard Burton traveled in disguise to Mecca, a journey underwritten by the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain. See also, Carlo Guarmani, *Northern Najd: A Journey from Jerusalem to Anaizah in Qasim* (London: Argonaut, 1938), translated from Italian by Lady Capel-Cure, introduction and notes by Douglas Carruthers.

the language in addition to costumes of the region as outward cover. Charles Doughty, an English traveler who wanted to visit Mecca, disguised himself as an Arab so that he could join the Hajj and safely enter the holiest city of Islam. Mecca was not open to tourists of other faiths, which gave the city and the Muslim pilgrimage to it an irresistible allure for some westerners who wanted to unlock its purported secrets or to expose its apostasy. Western travelers who made the arduous journey to Arabia were usually perceived as being in disguise, which gave them the aura of people with a clandestine mission. Arab tribal leaders were skeptical of western intentions, viewing most foreigners as either spies or religious zealots who wanted to challenge the Islamic faith. Some sheikhs of horse-breeding tribes viewed foreigners as horse-traders who wanted to take advantage of the desert's superior stock for their own financial gain.<sup>120</sup> Anne and Wilfrid provided a respite from all of these perceptions, as they traveled without disguise, sought to learn about Arabs, Arabia, and the horse of the desert. Anne was an accomplished connoisseur of horses and a selective buyer who respected her Arab hosts.

The travels in North Africa, Syria, and the Arab world were crucial to Anne's cosmopolitan worldview. Her first trip to India in 1878-1879 contributed to Anne's political worldview. It was in India that Anne was able to fuse her knowledge of the Arab world and foreign empires with Britain and the British Empire. Chapters three and four, with their travel detail and quotations from Anne's journals, describe, largely in her words, her personal journey, both politically and socially. Anne's future political activities in Egypt, India, and Ireland, are the results of these early journeys. Anne's journals make remarkable changes in tone and content from her observations of

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Guarmani is less known, but was an Italian who lived in Syria and Jerusalem, and was fluent in Arabic. He was commissioned by the court of Napoleon III to obtain quality Arab stallions from Arabia.

<sup>120</sup> Carlo Guarmani, *Northern Najd*, Introduction.

landmarks and geographical formations, anecdotes and lessons learned in the early travel volumes of the 1870's, to political comments and imperial observations by 1880 and 1881.

## EGYPT

By 1881, Lady Anne had observed British administration in Egypt, operating behind the scenes, and she had begun to perceive her government's using a double standard in dealing with the Turkish administration in Constantinople and Cairo, and with Egyptian leaders.<sup>121</sup> Egypt was politically complicated with its position as an official part of the Ottoman Empire, but with almost complete independence of action; it was also complicated with its levels of administrative, or official, elites of Turco-Circassian lineage and a level of Egyptian elites.<sup>122</sup> Each layer of elite had its own interests and power bases, many with European connections that depended on a status quo.<sup>123</sup> The interference of European interests, which began in earnest with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in the late eighteenth century, had by the late nineteenth century become overwhelming. Most of the elite classes who joined with the Nationalist Party and its revolution, did not intend to completely wrench Egypt from the empire of Constantinople, but to reduce or abolish European control of the Egyptian treasury and place native Egyptians in more positions of fiscal and military leadership.<sup>124</sup>

Lady Anne made an effort, along with Wilfrid, to gain the trust of Egyptians, notably Muhammad Abduh, Sheikh of al Azhar, later mufti of Cairo. She and Wilfrid

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<sup>121</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913 and add mss 53914.

<sup>122</sup> Alexander Scholch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!* (London: Ithaca, 1981), 41. Scholch provides a detailed description of the structure of the complicated socio-economic classes of Egypt just before the revolution.

<sup>123</sup> Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>124</sup> Alexander Scholch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!* (London: Ithaca, 1981), 137, 158.



also became close to the leaders of the National Party and Colonel Ahmed Arabi, leader of the Egyptian revolution in 1881.<sup>125</sup> Anne and Wilfrid responded positively to British requests for their help to provide communication between Britain and the nationalists, believing they could promote understanding in Cairo and London of the Egyptian nationalists' programme.<sup>126</sup> Anne and Wilfrid also responded to Egyptian requests to help them draft a constitution and create the framework for a modern parliament. Following great advances in Egyptian native government and administration, Anne witnessed the devastating impact of the Joint Note on the National Party and its followers. With the Joint Note, she watched as the powers of Europe, by proclaiming military support for a weakened Khedive and financially ailing government, planned to divide the spoils of Egyptian bankruptcy among themselves.

Anne expended tremendous effort to share Egypt's story with powerful friends and acquaintances in England, including Mary Gladstone, the daughter of British Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone.<sup>127</sup> In Egypt, too, Anne attended political meetings, had private conversations with political leaders, and gathered information from Egyptian princesses, women of harems, and varied conversations with Egyptians and Europeans. Anne became a rooted cosmopolitan who decided to use her cosmopolitan worldview and her English roots as a political activist on behalf of liberty and justice for Egypt and

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<sup>125</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 14 December 1881.

<sup>126</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881. This point is discussed more in Chapter Five. After British policy changed from support of the nationalists to conflict with them, the government made a concerted effort to marginalize and even ostracize Wilfrid for his participation with the nationalists. Lady Anne's part went virtually unnoticed.

<sup>127</sup> British Library, Gladstone papers, add mss 46251, f. 70. Letter from Lady Anne Blunt to Mary Gladstone; Lady Anne Blunt's further correspondence with Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, add mss 44479, f. 258, and add mss 44503, ff. 50, 65, 78.

Egyptians. She believed that Egyptians could govern themselves in Egypt just as the Arabs governed themselves in Arabia; western administration was not a requirement, and Gladstone had clearly stated before his election his commitment to liberty for native populations in the empire.

In the aftermath of the failed Egyptian revolution, Anne maintained continued support for the defense and eventual exile of Arabi and other nationalists (exile instead of execution). Arabi and several of the Nationalists did have their sentences commuted to exile in Ceylon, and Anne and Wilfrid visited them en route to India in 1883. By 1884, the British government had hardened its attitude toward Wilfrid, after he and Anne participated in Indian political meetings and Irish Home Rule activities. The British government decided to forbid Wilfrid to enter Egypt for four years, in effect exiling him from his property in Cairo. While Wilfrid was exiled from Egypt Anne could only work for the Egyptian nationalists remaining in Egypt from a long distance.

## INDIA

With Egypt and its politics rendered inaccessible to them, Lady Anne and Wilfrid traveled to India in 1883, with prior knowledge and at least tacit approval of the government, and visited Arabi and the nationalists in exile in Ceylon.<sup>128</sup> From Ceylon, they traveled widely in India visiting with Muslim and Hindu leaders, students, and teachers, as they all struggled under British imperial rule. Chapter Seven is important to the study of Lady Anne and her political activities in Egypt because India was the training ground for the political leaders and policymakers who affected Egypt.<sup>129</sup> India

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<sup>128</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, Elibron Classics, unabridged facsimile reproduction of original (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), 14.

<sup>129</sup> Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer*, . See also Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution*, See also, Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), ??? .

had been the focus of ideological discussion during the earlier administration of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, who brought to England's attention the concept of the greatness of the British Empire and its part in confirming the dominance of Britain around the world. The key to this dominance, according to Disraeli, was India, but after Disraeli's purchase of Khedive Ismail's Suez Canal shares in 1875, Egypt also became "necessary to maintain the Empire," giving it an important focus in British hearts and minds.<sup>130</sup> Disraeli's government had annexed Cyprus in 1878, designating the Mediterranean and the Canal, from that point forward, as vital to British interests.

When Disraeli's Tory government had given way to Gladstone's Liberal one in 1880, an air of reform became mixed with the fact of Empire. This mixture emerged with the idea of British civilization and occupation providing advantages for imperial subjects. The Liberal government wanted to "teach the Natives of India... [that Britain's] object...is simply to do as much good as possible."<sup>131</sup> With Gladstonian principles as their guide, Anne and Wilfrid pursued Egyptian liberty; their failure seemed to contradict the very foundations of the same Gladstonian principles. It was India, immediately following their experience in Egypt that illustrated for Anne and Wilfrid the complex forces within the Empire that offset Gladstone's policies. Egyptian and Indian Muslims communicated with each other and both hoped for liberty from the English yoke. Anne and Wilfrid's Indian experience provided a retrospective explanation of why they failed in Egypt, even as they sought to promote reform in India. Anne and Wilfrid believed that supporting Muslim academic and political education in India would provide the support for the Egyptian nationalists to achieve liberty for Egypt.

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<sup>130</sup> Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 59-60.

<sup>131</sup> Metcalf, *Ideologies*, 61.

In India, Anne was often the only woman present at political dinners and meetings, and she corresponded with many of the Indian men and women she met. At state dinners, such as one hosted by the Nizam of Hyderabad, Lady Anne was seated to the Nizam's right, a position of prominence.<sup>132</sup> During their extended trip in India, Anne and Wilfrid explored the possibility of founding a Muslim university to offset the effects of the British policy of favoring the Hindu community, and to prepare more Muslim Indians for leadership and administrative careers, and to hopefully support their counterparts in Egypt.

It was in India, in 1883, that Anne was able to see the Empire at work, and to understand the forces that contributed to the British invasion of Egypt in the year before.<sup>133</sup> In India, Anne also witnessed and experienced the government's effort to marginalize Wilfrid, and by association, Anne. She watched Wilfrid being maligned in the London press, as well as in the Indian press. She had shared his experiences with political debates in England, but watching the official mind try to shun Wilfrid in India gave Anne a clear understanding of how important it was to London to marginalize and silence Wilfrid's and her voices. Anne's standing in the social framework of the day offset much of the official effort to ostracize her anti-imperialist husband, but she experienced the uneven policy of the British government in 1883. During their visit, someone in the government—Anne was never sure who gave the order—forbade Viceroy Lord Ripon to invite Anne and Wilfrid to the Government House.<sup>134</sup> Anne and Wilfrid

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<sup>132</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936. Lady Anne drew a sketch of the dinner venue and her place at the head table. It was an honor for her to be seated in that location, and she appreciated it.

<sup>133</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 7.

<sup>134</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 10 January 1884. See also, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 8. Auckland Colvin, who had been controller-general in Cairo during the Egyptian revolution, made a serious effort to discredit Wilfrid publicly by publishing a negative article about him in the local *Pioneer*

were active, knowledgeable, and had nothing to lose in pursuing justice for Indians or Egyptians, hence the quiet but subversive process of marginalizing Wilfrid as much as possible.

## **IRELAND**

After Lady Anne and Wilfrid returned from India to England in 1883, Anne refocused her energy on the Irish Question and Home Rule, while helping Wilfrid in his bid for a seat in Parliament. With Arabi and the other nationalists in exile in Ceylon, and Egypt temporarily (they hoped) off limits for them, Wilfrid decided to try to achieve influence in politics through a seat in Parliament. Anne was ambivalent about joining traditional politics, fearing that the price would be a loss of integrity.<sup>135</sup> Once the decision was made, however, Anne immersed herself into the political process, and proceeded onto the campaign trail with characteristic attention to detail and commitment to justice. Exposure to the Irish question brought Anne's cosmopolitanism full circle. With Ireland, the pattern of political injustice emanating from London fostered the same conclusions that Anne had reached in Egypt and India: people who seek liberty and justice should be encouraged, not attacked. Anne's own Catholicism played a role in her views about Ireland, because she experienced the preeminence of the Anglican Church over other denominations. She viewed the Anglican Church as too politically tied to the British government.<sup>136</sup> The concept of Home Rule applied to any nation that was occupied by a foreign power, including religion. Throughout their efforts in Ireland, Egypt was never

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newspaper in India. Colvin also encouraged Ripon to marginalize, or ignore, the Blunts, in hopes of scuttling their plans in India.

<sup>135</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53922, 23 July 1883. Randolph Churchill was much of the inspiration behind Wilfrid's entrance into formal politics.

<sup>136</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53920, 1 April 1883.

far from Anne and Wilfrid's mind. Just as in India, Anne believed that if justice could be achieved in Ireland, the side effect could bestow liberty in Egypt.

Anne's diverse observations in the Arab world, Egypt, India, Ireland, and in England, are carefully recorded throughout her journals. She wrote details of people and places that would likely pass unnoticed to most travelers, but her record of them gives them context and purpose. Anne and Wilfrid developed an affinity for indigenous people, especially Egyptians and Arabs, which is evident in Anne's writings. Anne was selective in her praise of people, regardless of color or nationality, whether in Arabia or England, based on a cosmopolitan set of social and moral guidelines. She used the same guidelines for assessing Lady Revelstoke on a train in England that she used to evaluate the Sheikh of the Shammar, Jedaan.<sup>137</sup> Character, manners, and earnestness appealed to Anne's cosmopolitan view of the world and its people.

Throughout their close association with Muslims in the east and South Asia, Lady Anne and Wilfrid maintained their rooted Englishness in England—Anne as a committed Catholic, Wilfrid as a nominal Catholic—but stayed true to their knowledge and beliefs about the east, its religion and culture.<sup>138</sup> When they traveled in the east, they adopted aspects of Arab life that suited their travels, such as clothing and tent life, but never assumed the mantle of native Arabs. “Going native” was officially a highly discouraged action that occurred with some travelers and officers in the Foreign Office, but Anne and Wilfrid approached their eastern travels with a straightforward presentation of themselves. With neither pseudonym nor disguise, they achieved a comfortable

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<sup>137</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 14 October 1887. See also, Lady Anne Blunt, *Journals and Correspondence 1878-1917* (Cheltenham: Alexander Heriot, 1986), 32.

<sup>138</sup> Lady Anne Blunt, *Journals and Correspondence*, 386. Letter from Lady Anne to Wilfrid, 31 July 1917. Lady Anne had a spiritual experience in Persia en route to India in 1878, and quietly became a committed Catholic. She did not tell Wilfrid about it until a few months before her death in 1917.

relationship with their indigenous Arab neighbors and friends. Anne and Wilfrid wanted to be trustworthy and honest, and their consistent integrity fostered lifelong friendships for them in Egypt, Arabia, Syria, and India.

The cosmopolitan worldview of Lady Anne and Wilfrid extended to their marriage. In the east, they were soul mates, true partners in the pursuit of asil Arab horses, the exploration of Arab life and culture, nationalist politics, and the establishment of a home and Arab horse stud in Egypt.<sup>139</sup> Contrary to the reported sexual freedom experienced by British officers in some parts of the east, Wilfrid usually adopted what he called “the superior moral values of the east” while he was there. In Britain, Anne and Wilfrid’s marriage suffered from what he later called the lesser morals of Victorian aristocratic society and the distractions of the life of landed gentry.<sup>140</sup> Wilfrid was as pragmatic about admitting that certain women served as his muses with their friendship as Lady Anne was in describing her observations of people she met. Their marriage also suffered from their competition as doting parents of their only surviving child, Judith.<sup>141</sup> Anne and Wilfrid suffered the deaths of three previous infants and two miscarriages in relative silence, bearing the pain and going forward with their plans. The impact of the social difference between east and west, combined with the loss of these children cannot be underestimated in the ultimate marital stress that Anne and Wilfrid endured.

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<sup>139</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, Blunt mss, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Wilfrid explained his divergent moral behavior, based on his life in the east or the west.

<sup>140</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, Blunt mss, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

<sup>141</sup> Lady Emily Lutyens, *A Blessed Girl* (London: Rupert Hart Davis), 119. Lady Emily was a close friend of Judith’s. She was also a relative of the Blunts’ neighbors and close family friends, the Lyttons. Lady Emily observed the competition between Anne and Wilfrid for Judith’s favor.

The partnership that produced Wilfrid's vast collection of published material included Anne's voluminous and largely under-researched writings as well.<sup>142</sup> Anne was truly the silent partner, the woman behind the man whose name was in the press and on the books he published. Anne was the partner with the mathematical mind that recorded barometric measurements, mileage, and distance of their daily sojourns. Anne was the chronicler and painter who documented in detail the seminal travels and research of this politically pivotal couple. Anne sketched, painted, and wrote, as the worlds of Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and India unfolded before her. Anne did not embellish her journals, but wrote with accuracy and clarity; when she could not remember details, she recorded her lack of memory. Anne provided an encyclopedic account of vast journeys and unique experiences that underpinned steadfast politics and the development of her commitment to justice. For Anne, justice was rooted in a society's ability to govern itself without foreign interference.

Anne would often be the first western woman the Arabs had ever seen, not to mention included as a dinner guest. She and Wilfrid discussed tribal traditions, Arab horse breeding, and international politics with Bedouins and Sheikhs, with Anne's fluent Arabic providing much of the conversation (Wilfrid was fluent as well, but Anne was more proficient).<sup>143</sup> Anne befriended Arab women in the harems of the desert tents and the tribal villages of the region. Through personal relationships, hardships, and unknown territory, Anne and Wilfrid had an impact on the indigenous cultures they traversed as well as on their own government's policy when they shared their knowledge and

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<sup>142</sup> The Wentworth Bequest, British Library, contains 339 volumes of Lady Anne Blunt's journals, as well as many other papers related to family business, the Crabbet Arabian Stud, and Judith Blunt, later Lady Wentworth. This paper only uses a fraction of the total number of Lady Anne Blunt's journals, and concentrates on those that relate to her political activities.

<sup>143</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, 47. Blunt mss, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.



experience in Britain. Anne's position as the first western woman to visit the Arab world was arguably a pivotal event in the Arab region she visited, and was an important component to her own cosmopolitan worldview.

By the time Anne and Wilfrid had spent time in the desert with most of the major tribes of Arabia, Mesopotamia, Sinai, and Syria, they had a distinctly different framework for assessing town, or urban Arabs, and the desert Bedouin Arabs. Of the Bedouin, Anne saw them at what could later be termed the height of their civilization in modern times. Bedouin tribal government was, as Anne wrote, wholly republican; outside influences had had little effect, or corruption as it was sometimes called, on their culture.<sup>144</sup> Isolation benefited Bedouin culture in keeping its traditions pure; Arabs of the towns adopted a different culture from that of the Bedouin, and they were more vulnerable to political influences from outside their region. Anne was able to record this remote place while it was still in a pure state and before the dramatic changes of the next century appeared on the horizon.

In a similar manner, Lady Anne was able to view Indians, Muslims and Hindus, in the same way she viewed Arabs in their homeland. She appreciated Indians on the merits of their character, manners, and commitment to reform.<sup>145</sup> Anne's experience in India provided her with the opportunity to visualize India without the British Empire, and to visualize Britain without India. For Anne, the two did not necessarily demand one another; trading relationships could be separate and successful with both nations operating independently. Anne believed that British duplicity in India, just like in Egypt,

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<sup>144</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, Skene to the Blunts in Aleppo.

<sup>145</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53934, 28 December 1883. For example, Raja Hassan expressed to Lady Anne his desires for reform. He also told her that his first dinner with Anne and Wilfrid was his first dinner with Europeans.

would ultimately result in the Empire's decline, and that the forthright approach would be to support Indians as independents. Egypt and India combined to prove to Anne that liberty and justice should prevail if Britain desired to maintain its position as a world power committed to high ideals. Anne could see beyond imperial mantras such as those of Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, the new consul-general in Egypt, who believed that ruling over Orientals required despotic government with a benevolent increase in the standard of living of the native inhabitants.<sup>146</sup> For India and Egypt, Anne would have had more in common with the argument of Richard Cobden, who wrote about British government in India:

Hindoostan must be ruled by those who live on that side of the globe. Its people will prefer to be ruled badly—according to our notions—by its own colour, kith and kin, than to submit to the humiliation of being better governed by a succession of transient intruders from the antipodes.<sup>147</sup>

These two concepts of the position of Western society in relation to eastern societies suggest that the two could not be reconciled, but Lady Anne was willing to try to ameliorate policy which was based on Cromer's philosophy, and infuse some measure, at least, of her own concept of justice, which could be articulated in Cobden's argument above. Lady Anne's arguably unique travel experiences contributed to the basis of her own philosophy of justice.

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<sup>146</sup> Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1968), 27. See also, Lord Cromer, "The Government of Subject Races" (1908).

<sup>147</sup> Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire*, 26. Cobden's daughters and Anne were friends and were politically active on liberal issues and Home Rule.

### Chapter Three: Anne as a Cosmopolitan: Algeria to Aleppo

The Sheykh's manners were excellent, very ceremonious but not cold...The cookery and the people remind us of the frontier towns of the Sahara, everything good of its kind, good food, good manners, and good welcome. Then when we had all eaten heartily down to the last servant, he asked us who we were.<sup>148</sup>

Lady Anne Blunt's personal development as a British woman with a cosmopolitan worldview and a strong sense of useful purpose was a steady process. This process began with her travels in North Africa, Syria, and Arabia, came of age in Egypt during the revolution of 1882, and matured her into what could be termed a rooted cosmopolitan—a British woman whose worldview was egalitarian and based on justice and liberty. Lady Anne held this egalitarian view throughout her political life in Egypt, Arabia, India, Ireland, and Britain. In Algeria, Lady Anne viewed most of the Algerian people in a state of relative liberty in the countryside, so the effects of empire—French Empire—were more obvious in the towns. Algeria was the first place in which Anne witnessed empire changing local culture.<sup>149</sup> By the time she and her husband, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, traveled to Sinai and Syria in the next two years, Anne's observations, as recorded in her journals, became more complex. She began to reflect a deeper appreciation for the nuances of local culture, foreign influence, and the effects of local collaboration. Anne's more sophisticated observations provided a chronicle of her own development; Anne never rebelled against her Englishness or against England. Anne held

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<sup>148</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 54075-54078, 20 December 1878. Also, Lady Anne Blunt, *A Pilgrimage to Nejd* (London: John Murray, 1881), v 1, 58.

<sup>149</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner, 1991), 270. By the middle of the nineteenth century (1860), French emigration to Algeria comprised approximately ten percent of the total population. Lady Anne and Wilfrid traveled there fifteen years later, so the demographics would have been similar. The economic system in the towns was dominated by French administration and Algerian collaborators. The countryside, as Lady Anne noted, was more traditional.

England to a higher standard of political and cultural thought, grounded pragmatically in the English legacy of liberty and justice. Anne was a citizen of the world who was comfortable with her roots in the England of her birth, just as she was comfortable in Egypt as the home of her adult life.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid began their eastern travels in 1873, with two major trips in one year. They traveled to Turkey in the spring of 1873, returned to England for summer, then traveled to Algeria in December of 1873 and early spring of 1874. They followed these trips with travels to Jerusalem, Egypt, and Sinai in 1875. Their involvement with Egypt began with their first visit to Cairo in 1875, and continued almost uninterrupted until Anne's death at her garden horse farm, Sheykh Obeyd, in 1917. The Blunts' initial involvement with the Arab world and Egypt centered upon their interest in Arab horses, along with a tourist's curiosity about the region's ancient history, way of life, and monuments.<sup>150</sup> The pursuit of purebred horses of the North African and Arab world represented an embedded English legacy and ideal much like those of political liberty and justice. The discussion and analysis of horse breeding and the qualities of well-bred horses were essential elements of English culture.<sup>151</sup> Lady Anne's family legacy of Thoroughbred horse breeding reinforced her determination to witness the asil horse in his native environment.<sup>152</sup> With each eastern trip, Anne and Wilfrid's

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<sup>150</sup>Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), 1.

<sup>151</sup> Donna Landry, *Noble Brutes: How Eastern Horses Transformed English Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 146.

<sup>152</sup> The term, "Thoroughbred," refers to the distinct breed of racehorse developed in England from the mixing of imported Arabian horse stallions with indigenous English race mares. The combinations eventually resulted in today's well-known racehorses, which are registered in their national jockey club registries around the world. The proper noun refers to this breed; the lower case, "thoroughbred," is a synonym for "asil," or "purebred." Lady Anne's mother's family descended from the well-known Milbanke Stud.

exposure to foreign lands and cultures encouraged their appreciation of the east and their knowledge and understanding of the people who lived there.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid began, during these extended trips, to learn about the Turkish government and its Ottoman provinces; they also began to learn the Arabic language and local dialects as they learned about the people who spoke it. The time Anne and Wilfrid spent with town-dwellers, tribes, and their horses ultimately made the difference in their perspective of Arab people and Arab culture, providing the catalyst that helped define their cosmopolitanism. They developed an affinity for the indigenous people of Algeria, just as they did in Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and later India, which is evident in Anne's writings. Throughout her close association with Arabs and Indians, Muslims and Hindus, in the Arab east and in South Asia, Anne maintained her Englishness in England, but stayed true to her knowledge of and beliefs in the east. When she and Wilfrid traveled in the east, they both adopted aspects of Arab life that suited their travels, such as clothing, food, animals, and tent life, but neither Anne nor Wilfrid ever assumed the mantle of native Arabs. The Blunts approached their eastern travels with an honest presentation of themselves both abroad and at home. As the first European travelers in the heart of the Arab world to present themselves as they were, with neither pseudonym nor disguise, they created an opportunity to have arguably the first honest discussions between a western man and woman and Arab tribes. Anne also visited Arab women in their tents, and in their harems in the towns, giving her a unique perspective on the women of the region and their culture.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> David George Hogarth and J.G. Bartholomew, *The Penetration of Arabia: A Record of the Development of Western Knowledge Concerning the Arabian Peninsula* (New York: Frederick Stokes, 1904), 254.

## VIEWS OF EMPIRE

Corruption! said the Sheikh [who told this allegorical anecdote]...The horse said to the camel, ‘why is your neck so crooked?’ The camel answered, ‘Is my back straight, or are my legs straight, that you find fault with my neck?’<sup>154</sup>

The use of metaphor or analogy was common in the Arab world as a method of making a political or moral statement. This example demonstrates the Arabs’ view of Turkish, or Ottoman, corruption. As this analogy suggests, Anne and Wilfrid discovered that there was so much corruption in the Turkish administration that locating one example of it only led to the discovery of other corrupt practices. The time in which Anne and Wilfrid traveled in Turkey was the latter part of a period of attempts to reform Ottoman administration in Turkey and in the greater empire. The results of the reform efforts were mixed, but one of the overriding features was the centralization of power, which left some rural districts with less of a local power structure. Anne’s account here was likely the result of a power vacuum in the countryside which had led to rampant corruption.

During their 1873 trip to Turkey, Anne and Wilfrid first realized what they termed the “extreme misgovernment” of the Turks in Arab lands, contrasted with the “happiness of the still independent tribes.”<sup>155</sup> Anne and Wilfrid saw conscripted soldiers driven in chains from villages in Syria and Mesopotamia [Iraq] to fight for the Turks against the Russians. Arab anger at being forced to fight battles for an oppressive regime touched the sympathies of Anne and Wilfrid, and provided the foundation for their future efforts to achieve liberty for Egypt.<sup>156</sup> Anne and Wilfrid made a distinction between the Turks of

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<sup>154</sup> LAB journals add mss 53889, 13 December 1877. This story was told to British Consul to Aleppo, James Henry Skene, by an Arab sheikh, in response to Turkish efforts to reform government.

<sup>155</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 27.

<sup>156</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 27. The war here is the Russo-Turkish war, 1877-78.

Turkey, who as people they appreciated and respected, and the Turk as an Ottoman imperial oppressor in foreign provinces, where he was “too often a rapacious tyrant.”<sup>157</sup>

One of the reasons for the oppression the Blunts witnessed was the transition occurring during the latter part of the Tanzimat, the Ottoman effort to reform their government and consolidate power. In an ironic twist, the reformist efforts, which had reduced the power of the ulama, had provided the ruler with more avenues to direct power, such as conscription, than the system had allowed in the past.<sup>158</sup> Lady Anne and Wilfrid, who understood the traditional role of the ulama and its support from local lands, made the following observation: “Every villayet had been bought with money at Constantinople, and the purchasing Valy was making what fortune he could during his term of office out of those he was given to administer.”<sup>159</sup> The Blunts noticed agricultural land out of production, Damascus showing signs of decay, and what Wilfrid termed a “moral plague” brought on by inhabitants’ adopting the corrupt practices of their Ottoman officials.<sup>160</sup> The lack of production attributed to areas governed by the Turks was an observation the Blunts often made. Anne wrote, “It is remarkable how much more prosperous the land looks as soon as one gets away from Turkish administration.”<sup>161</sup> It was

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<sup>157</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 28.

<sup>158</sup> John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 91.

<sup>159</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 28. This process was part of the Ottoman plan to nationalize the ulama lands to weaken the power of the countryside and increase the power of the central government. Because the central government presented plans for reform, these centralizing efforts first appeared as methods of introducing and enforcing reform. To Anne and Wilfrid, the process was one of making corruption more efficient.

<sup>160</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 28. This was the time period of the Tanzimat, and it is interesting to read Wilfrid’s perspective when history views the Tanzimat as a period of great reform and progressive thought in Turkey.

<sup>161</sup> Lady Anne Blunt, *A Pilgrimage to Nejd*, 57.

this vision of Ottoman—imperial—influence that likely affected Anne and Wilfrid’s concept of Ottoman government in Egypt, and imperialism in general.

#### **ALGERIA, 1873-1874**

After traveling in Turkey, with its historic location straddling the east and the west, Anne and Wilfrid took one step closer to the east. Algeria was Anne and Wilfrid’s first bold adventure. With Europe, Spain, and Turkey behind them, they were ready to attempt more challenging travels in more remote lands. The reality of travel in Algeria began with the frustrations of finding transportation (good camels and horses) and guides, which postponed the launching of their trip for almost two weeks. Once they finally began their journey, Anne suffered a miscarriage, her third in less than five years of marriage.<sup>162</sup> Anne’s morale had been low after the first two miscarriages, and worse after losing an infant son in 1870, followed by premature twins who died in 1872. Lady Anne’s depression after this miscarriage was no surprise and was devastating for her. After an arduous recovery in the desert, and being carried in a litter for many days, Anne resumed the planned course of travel. The journey ahead gave her the strength to overcome their tragic loss and gave both Anne and Wilfrid a sense of purpose, but the devastation of losing another child, a boy and future heir, stayed with both of them.

For Lady Anne, the initial process of learning about Arabs and North African Berbers was a series of mixed encounters. In almost parallel experiences, Anne’s exposure to native Berbers was mixed with that of western consuls and diplomats who crossed paths with Anne and Wilfrid during their travels. One such encounter serves as a description of the educational process that Anne and Wilfrid experienced. The French

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<sup>162</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53851, Janvier [January] 9, 1874. Anne had two miscarriages during her first year of marriage in 1869; a baby boy born in 1870 died a few days after birth; twin girls born prematurely in 1872 died shortly after birth. Judith, her only surviving child, was born premature in 1873, but survived.



consul for Algeria, Henri Teissier, met Anne and Wilfrid and offered his advice. He “talked a good deal about the Arabs and told us he should ‘never trust any one of them.’”<sup>163</sup> The consul further warned the Blunts that all of the Arabs were thieves, to which Anne responded, “Of course he must have had plenty of time to find out what their characters are, but our experience certainly goes against this...for we have never been robbed of anything...” Anne writes that she and Wilfrid had often left their articles unattended and had never missed even small items. She doubted that the same could be said of leaving items unattended in England. She suspected that Teissier had spent little time in the interior with the tribes and had the majority of his experience in the towns and cities where the Arabs worked in close contact and collaborated with the French occupation. She noted also that the lack of loyalty that troubled Teissier’s opinion of Arabs was likely due to the Arabs’ being a conquered people. Two days later, Anne had an occasion to meet Madame Teissier. She wrote that Madame Teissier was “not an interesting person but was full of domestic virtues.”<sup>164</sup> For Anne, an interesting person with a useful purpose in life could discuss politics, cultural issues, or Arab horses, and Madame Tessier lacked these qualities. Anne found a positive attribute in Tessier’s domesticity, which was an indication of Anne’s optimism—she worked to find a positive comment—and her egalitarian worldview.

Algerian travel taught Anne her first words of Arabic, exposure to virtually unknown local languages, tribes, and cultures, and gave her hard lessons in the planning process for difficult journeys in the Arab world. At one point, when she and Wilfrid had made a day’s progress away from the town of Tiaret, Anne discovered that their Algerian

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<sup>163</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53857, April 11, 1874, British Library...French consul was named M. Teissier in the journals, which refers to Henri Tessier, British vice consul for Algiers.

<sup>164</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53857, 12 April 1874.

guide and assistant, Ben Youssef, had neglected to let them know that their store of barley was gone. They were a day away from the nearest supply, and Anne wrote in her journal, “it shews that it won’t do to trust anybody for a single minute or in the simplest thing.”<sup>165</sup> Trust, in this context, related to organization rather than to integrity. Anne, Wilfrid, and their entourage traveled the next day with very little to eat.

Anne’s interest in finding a useful purpose for her activities was the guiding force that made her take an academic interest in her travel journal on this early journey. The academic expectations of foreign travels required knowledge of flora, fauna, geography, weather, and cartography. Anne learned many of the more advanced techniques of each of these disciplines as they made these early travels. She noted barometric measurements in her journals, and often described directions and locations with scientific language. She also detailed the animals they saw and sometimes befriended, including the two pointers, Ben and Bob, that they acquired in Algeria. She and Wilfrid also tamed a Barbary falcon (Anne noted that Wilfrid distinguished the bird as different from the Peregrine falcon, with which they were both very familiar) that unfortunately died while they were near Tiaret.<sup>166</sup>

Anne wrote her journals on the Algerian trip with a scientific, or academic tone; she did not write her journals with a romantic flare like some of the other Victorian travelers. She wrote events as they happened or her opinion as she believed it, but she did not embellish her travel narrative. In her later published journals, Wilfrid contributed substantial editing due to Anne’s drier writing style. In describing geographical phenomena, Anne wrote as though she were speaking. Finding fresh water was a constant

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<sup>165</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, f 23, 5 February 1874.

<sup>166</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, f. 19, 4 February 1874.

concern, and dry river and streambeds alluded to times of plentiful water. On one occasion, on their way to Tiaret, Anne wrote:

It is necessary however to mention that further on...there was really a run of water in the stream—it was not much water but clear—Here in this country, rivers are so odd, in some places salt, and sometimes getting bigger as you go up them and vanishing as you go down them, that you never know what to expect.<sup>167</sup>

Anne went on to comment that the great rivers appeared on maps, but arriving at one of them, the river would be no more than a tiny thread of water, belying its breadth on the map. There was evidence of flooding after heavy rain, as dry riverbeds showed the effects of erosion and high water marks.

Riding and writing in Algeria were often difficult. Anne and Wilfrid took daily hardships in stride, but modern reading of the daily details conjures images of the extreme effort that desert travel required. When times were difficult, Anne described them as such. On one occasion, she and Wilfrid and their two guides were unable to light a satisfactory fire and prepare satisfactory food, and they went to sleep hungry, “it was besides cold, and we had to go to sleep unsatisfied, in fact starved.”<sup>168</sup> On another morning, it began to rain as Anne and Wilfrid and their guides were packing. The thermometer read forty degrees Fahrenheit, it was raining, and it took two hours to pack. The travelers mounted their horses and rode away, even as the rain subsided for the moment. Riding in the rain in forty degree weather in unknown territory would be a challenge to any traveler in any century.<sup>169</sup> In another location, Anne wrote that the

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<sup>167</sup>LAB journals, add mss 53853, p. 6, 31 January 1874.

<sup>168</sup>LAB journals, add mss 53853, f. 8, 31 January 1874. Anne details the preparation of soup with water that had been carried in a camel bag and smelled of tar, instead of using the fresh water from the stream by which they camped. The fire would not maintain itself long enough to cook the soup or to make bread, which was almost gone. The series of mishaps led to the whole group’s unpleasant night.

<sup>169</sup>LAB journals, add mss 53853, p. 9, 1 February 1874.

clothes they had retrieved from the washerwoman at Tiaret the day before, had frozen solid in the saddlebag because it was so cold. She wrote that it was the bitterest cold they had experienced, with a black frost and a northeast wind blowing hard. On the same day, Anne also noted that it was their infant daughter, Judith's, first birthday.<sup>170</sup> Anne's drawings and paintings that depicted their desert life reflected the beauty and the solitude of their journeys. When conditions were particularly challenging, she did not always have the energy to draw or paint. One evening she wrote, after going all day with no food, "Pompey had made a fire and now the pilaf was being cooked with one fowl in it and it is eight o'clock and we are half dead for want of some proper food and I cannot make the pictures I want to, for hunger."<sup>171</sup> The deprivation and hardship Anne experienced contributed to her cosmopolitan worldview because she learned the ways of life of the people who spent generations in the areas in which she traveled.

Anne showed what became her characteristically easy understanding of Islamic religious traditions throughout their travels in Algeria. Anne never formally studied Islam, as Wilfrid did several years later at Al Azhar University in Cairo, but she pragmatically accepted Islam as a central element of Arab culture. Aware that Islam was a dynamic religion with many different variations, she made an effort to adapt to the custom at hand. One of the Algerian guides, Muhammad, observed a stricter version of Islamic dietary laws than their other guide. Muhammad initially believed that he was unable to eat meat killed by persons of a different faith; he was unable to dine with them as well. When Wilfrid shot partridges along the way to add to their food stores, he offered

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<sup>170</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, 6 Feb 1874. Anne also wrote that she dreamed about Judith, worried that she was ill. She was so frightened by the dream that the fear awakened her before she knew if Judith survived her illness or not. This incident was an example of the anxiety Anne experienced in leaving her home and her only surviving daughter for such extended periods of time.

<sup>171</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, 1 February 1874, 10.

one to Muhammad to prepare in his own way. Anne wrote about this incident with complete comfort; she made no comment about the religious issue other than to explain why Wilfrid gave the partridge to Muhammad.<sup>172</sup> Later, Muhammad declared that he was no longer an Arab, but rather French or English, and therefore he could share a meal with the Blunts. Anne wrote that the other guide basked in the glory of his own success in convincing Muhammad to join the group; Anne wrote that Muhammad took the kidding in good fun.<sup>173</sup> Anne displayed her optimism with humor and understanding, while at the same time developing her broad-based worldview.

Lady Anne believed that part of the purpose of her travel was to describe the structures they passed on their travels as well as the cultural and geographical sights. On their way to Tiaret, Anne noticed a building on a hill. Inquiring about its purpose, she did not get an adequate answer. When they drew closer, Anne wrote that it was a koubba like all other koubbas, with a green door and a cemetery around it. Anne understood its purpose as a local chapel and cemetery; a place for baths and prayers for local dwellers or travelers in between mosques in the cities.<sup>174</sup> Anne's personal talent as an artist provided her with an appreciation for architecture as well. She recorded cultural structures like a koubba in both her journals, and with her art. She painted many scenes, geographical and cultural, as well as architectural, in the process of keeping her journals. Her Algerian journals are full of her artwork, in the form of sketches and paintings.

This Algerian trip and the journals that describe it offer an early glimpse of Lady Anne's egalitarian approach to describing the people she and Wilfrid encountered along the way. While on the same route as the koubba, Lady Anne and Wilfrid came upon a low

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<sup>172</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53854, 18 February 1874, f. 3.

<sup>173</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53854, 21 February 1874, f. 15

<sup>174</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, p. 10, 1 February 1874.

house of typical Arab shape with tents beside it. The master of the house rode up to them on “a good-looking horse” and offered the travelers his hospitality. Anne referred to him as “the Arab gentleman” whom they asked for some firewood. He gave them coffee in his house, after which the Blunts asked him for a few pieces of wood to use for the remainder of their journey to Tiaret. The Arab gentleman gave it to the grateful travelers and they were on their way. Anne wrote that she and Wilfrid appreciated Arab hospitality.<sup>175</sup> As Anne experienced Arab hospitality during their travels, she developed the positive view of Arab people that defined her opinion for the rest of her life, and inspired her to learn more about the Arabs’ languages, cultures, and religions.

Evidence of ancient history and modern civilization existed simultaneously in Algeria, as Anne wrote about Roman ruins on one side of their path and telegraph lines to Tiaret on the other side. She said they would follow the telegraph line the remainder of the way to Tiaret, through the “cold and windy hills.”<sup>176</sup> This mix of old and new, history and culture, included the people of the desert. At a spring, there were women fetching water, among them “a handsome negro woman wearing bracelets amongst them.”<sup>177</sup> On another road, Wilfrid and Anne asked a passing horseman if he had seen their camels (one of their guides had preceded them with the camels to find a place to camp, while Anne and Wilfrid pursued after investigating some of the geographical sights). Wilfrid asked the rider questions in “half Arabick half Spanish.” Wilfrid’s inclination to use half Arabic and half Spanish indicates the lasting effects of the long association of North

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<sup>175</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, p. 10, 1 Feb 1874. This account is important because it shows Anne’s consistent focus on horses; it also demonstrates her egalitarian view of people, with the Arab man referred to as a gentleman, a term that would more often, in her time, refer to a man of upper socio-economic class in England.

<sup>176</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, p. 10, 1 Feb 1874.

<sup>177</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, 10, 1 Feb 1874

Africa with Islamic Spain.<sup>178</sup> The combined languages also indicate Anne and Wilfrid's early and elementary Arabic knowledge. Anne continued Arabic lessons for years, never satisfied with her own knowledge. Anne remained committed to fulfilling a useful purpose in her life, and continued to cultivate her knowledge.

In these years just before the so-called scramble for Africa emerged in full force, France and Britain were already competing for trade concessions and spheres of influence in the Mediterranean territories and inland. Lady Anne and Wilfrid were bound by international understanding to make regular contact with French officials while they were traveling in Algeria because Algeria was already considered a French colony. In Tiaret, a French official "of some inferior grade" asked the Blunts for their papers and suggested that he would inspect the Blunt camp. Once the official learned that the Blunts' entourage included a spahi from his superior, Generale Lovardo, the official retracted his threat and declined to inspect their camp or their papers.<sup>179</sup> In imperial territory, European political connections made an important difference, facilitating uninterrupted travel. These were some of the early lessons of empire that later defined Anne and Wilfrid's view of European control of Arab lands, and contributed to Anne's worldview.

As the foreign influence of imperial domination became more obvious to Lady Anne and Wilfrid, Anne's journals reflected her growing displeasure with the corruption that foreign influence generated. Anne expressed respect for the purity of places that did not reflect the influences of western civilization. Near Frenda, she painted a picture of an

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<sup>178</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, 6 Feb 1874, p. 22

<sup>179</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53853, p. 17, 3 Feb 1874. The significance of this incident is simply that the Blunts had made a connection in the French colonial hierarchy that trumped that of the official who considered inspecting their camp. The intent to inspect their camp was likely due to the official's fear that he would allow British spies to operate on his turf. With the superior official's spahi as the Blunts' liaison, the inferior official's responsibility was deferred to the spahi.

old tree next to a koubba, with Arabs surrounding the area watching them. Anne wrote a caption under the picture, “The view of this town was peculiar because there are the old walls still left—and it has not been frenchified at all as far as we could see. The collection of Arabs was so great that Hadji [the Blunts’ guide and helper] said, “ne vous jemanda, mon cher ami, estee qu’il y a encore des Arabes dans la ville.”<sup>180</sup> The other guide, Ben Youssef, commented that there were mostly Jews in Frenda (they wore white turbans) and only one Frenchman other than a few soldiers. Anne wrote that since it was Saturday, the Jews were “walking about smartly dressed and doing nothing, and a dozen of them followed the camels for some short distance...”<sup>181</sup> Anne’s comments provided an interesting picture of the social fabric of Frenda at that time. In her usual even-handed manner, Anne described what she saw with dispassionate comment. Her description also illustrates the co-existence of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, in North Africa at the time.

Colonialism, or empire, was ever-present, but not necessarily unpleasant for British travelers. Anne noted on occasions that French officials were gracious hosts and offered their hospitality and support for the Blunts’ travels.<sup>182</sup> On other occasions, she referred to the pure culture of Algerian villages that had not been corrupted by French influences. Her balanced view of the French officials, rather than one of disparagement, is another example of the cosmopolitan view that defined Anne. From the Algerian trip throughout the rest of her life, Anne adopted a progressively cosmopolitan worldview,

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<sup>180</sup>LAB journals, add mss 53853, 7 Feb 1874, p. 25. Anne and Wilfrid shared artistic talent and often contributed to each other’s drawings or paintings. Wilfrid had less patience for drawing and painting than Anne, so the majority of the artwork is hers.

<sup>181</sup>LAB journals, add mss 53853, 7 Feb 1874, p. 25. Anne commented further that the reason the Jews followed the camels was because the likely thought Hadji was a Jew as well. The same thing happened before at Tiaret because of Hadji’s prominent nose. Translation: you wonder if there are still Arabs in the city—a remark in reference to the large number observing their camp.

<sup>182</sup>LAB journals, add mss 53853, f. 19, 4 February 1874.



while maintaining her English roots. The Algerian trip was key to the beginning of her concept of the effects of European empires on native people, and to developing Anne's worldview.

Algeria was an introduction to Arabia and Egypt for Lady Anne and Wilfrid. Anne enjoyed Algeria, found it beautiful and respected the people they met but she and Wilfrid had begun to set their sights on Arabia. With the training grounds of Turkey and Algeria behind them, Anne and Wilfrid planned to visit the Sinai and Jerusalem in an effort to venture deeper into the Arab world. They had experienced a form of Arab and Islamic culture in North Africa; they had visited mosques, caravanserais, and ancient temples in Turkey and Algeria. The more Anne and Wilfrid traveled in the Arab world, and the closer they were to its heartland, the more their eastern association served to whet their appetite for pure Arab culture and asil horses in Arabia. Anne and Wilfrid began to formulate their plans to find the finer horses of the desert Arabs and to make their travels count for something, either social or political, or both. Anne and Wilfrid referred to their Turkish and Algerian travels, in spite of the tragedy and hardships, as the time of their honeymoon. Their subsequent trips gradually acquired the mantle of travels with purpose.

Algeria provided Anne with an introduction to French colonial North Africa, a form of colonialism which she viewed at the time as less desirable than British colonialism. This tour planted the seed of what would become her opposition to all colonialism and imperialism as she witnessed the ignorance, if not disrespect, of local culture and history that the majority of European officials embraced. The sophisticated, egalitarian worldview Anne developed from these travels would form the basis of her outlook on the Arab world for the rest of her life.

## FURTHER EAST TO SINAI AND SYRIA

In the spring of 1876, Lady Anne and Wilfrid arrived in Cairo with the plan of traveling through Suez, the Sinai, through Akaba, and on to Jerusalem. This trip was the second step they made toward their new goal of investigating the world of Arab people, culture, and horses. Anne had elementary knowledge of the Arabic language at this time, and substantial knowledge of North African Berber and Arabic customs, Bedouin culture, and the rules of desert travel. Even with their experience from North Africa, their ignorance of Arab ways in the Sinai region caused them near tragedies, and only through good luck were they able to avoid great misfortune. Anne and Wilfrid nearly died of thirst after running out of water en route to Palestine, due to having offended members of the Howeytat, the tribe that normally guided travelers through the area. Sheer ignorance caused them to ignore the Howeytat, and then fear the Arabs who governed the oasis where they finally found water. As they watered themselves and their animals, the Arabs of the oasis challenged them. Had Anne and Wilfrid known what to do, they would have offered compensation for the supplies they took and would have likely made fast friends with the Arabs of that watering place. Instead, the Arabs threatened them and showed their anger at having strangers take their precious water without asking and without paying.<sup>183</sup> The lessons learned in Palestine and Sinai served them well later, when Anne and Wilfrid became friends with many of the Sinai tribes. The political importance of these tribes emerged later as participants in the Egyptian revolution and its aftermath, albeit not in the way that Anne and Wilfrid wished. Such was the desert education of Anne and Wilfrid early in their travels, which served them well each year in the future

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<sup>183</sup> Wilfrid Blunt, *Secret History*, 25.

when they made their desert treks. It also contributed to the cosmopolitan education that defined Anne's worldview and her future political efforts.

The near tragedy of the Sinai sojourn served to illustrate to Anne her need to learn the Arabic language as well as to become more proficient in her knowledge of Arab culture and customs. Both mindful of their need to educate themselves, Anne and Wilfrid planned their trip to Aleppo to coincide with a visit by the recently retired British consul, James Henry Skene, a known expert on the region, and author on eastern culture and affairs. If it is possible to credit one experience with providing Anne with the knowledge, experience, and tools that would shape the rest of her life, that experience could arguably be the time she and Wilfrid spent in Aleppo. Having traveled previously to Turkey, Algeria, Sinai, and Egypt, then deciding to embark into Arabia, Aleppo was the turning point in the Blunts' knowledge of Arabic, Arabs, and the culture they would know and understand so well. It was from Aleppo that Anne emerged as a blossoming cosmopolitan; after traveling to the interior of Arabia, the firmly cosmopolitan part of her persona emerged and remained for life.

In late 1877 and early 1878, Anne and Wilfrid traveled to Syria, toward the city of Aleppo. Anne's journals reveal the active role Anne played in preparing for the journey. Prior to their departure from England, she had written of the household arrangements she made for paying employees during their absence, providing for the care of the horses and dogs, and, of course, arrangements made for Judith in the absence of her parents. Besides household concerns, Anne arranged for overdrafts with her banker, withdrew sums of money, purchased revolvers and ammunition, and discussed the details of the British expatriates in the Arab region whom they would likely encounter during their travels.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 19 Nov 1877.

Anne enjoyed her travels but she regretted the long absences, especially from Judith. The anticipation of being away was difficult for her. She wrote letters to her brother, Ralph Noel, later Lord Wentworth, and others in the event of her death, with the intention of making sure her daughter would have the care she needed if she were orphaned. She wrote, “I expect the whole journey will be as unlike as possible to anything expected. However, as I must go I shall make the best of it.”<sup>185</sup> When she was close to departure, Anne usually made comments that indicated that she was forced to go. Judith later interpreted such comments as proof that Wilfrid coerced Anne into traveling. Once Anne was on her way, her journals revealed how much she enjoyed traveling. Later, her journals also revealed how much Anne enjoyed gaining the knowledge and understanding of native people that contributed to her cosmopolitan worldview. Anne loved her travels and was committed to the idea along with Wilfrid; she just had normal maternal misgivings at the time of actual departure, especially given the ambitious and potentially dangerous nature of her travels. Anne believed in the useful purpose of exploring the Arab world and finding its asil horses; later she added political goals to her list of useful purposes for travel in the Arab world.

The journey to Aleppo marked the period of time when Anne and Wilfrid began to chart for themselves the course that would define the rest of their lives. Anne, like Wilfrid, bonded with the ways of the East without losing her Britishness; at the same time, she committed her resources to procuring horses with which to begin breeding Arab horses outside their homeland. The trip to Aleppo and on to the Euphrates valley gave the

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<sup>185</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 23 Nov 1877. Anne’s brother, Ralph, was also known as Lord Wentworth, the title he inherited after the death of their older brother, Byron, Viscount of Ockham.

Blunts the knowledge and understanding of the Arab world and culture that provided the foundation for their later political commitment to Egypt and its native people.

Traveling in Syria required Lady Anne and Wilfrid to face new challenges, especially when they decided to add a trip to Baghdad and Mesopotamia to their itinerary. When Anne and Wilfrid inquired about transportation on the Euphrates, Anne's brother, Ralph, told them that the steamer company, Lynch and Company, reported that there was no steamer on the Euphrates, and that the only way to travel to Diyarbakir was "by post." From there, they said that a raft on the Tigris would be the only way to get to Baghdad. Lynch also reported that the country between Diyarbakir and Baghdad was unsafe for travel. Wilfrid responded by declaring that the reports were "nonsense," to which Anne agreed.<sup>186</sup> Anne and Wilfrid had already acquired a level of experience in the east that rivaled most of their contemporaries. They were less easily convinced by the rumors and misinformation that were rampant about the region. The British diplomat to Sweden at Stockholm, Mr. Watson, sought to provide Anne with his advice and experience in the east by giving her a speech about his travels. Anne wrote that he claimed to have traveled from Armenia to Baghdad more than two decades before, but his speech "bored Ralph and me to extinction with his ruins and perpetual spring," and Anne did not feel enlightened by any of his references.<sup>187</sup> She had enough experience in her own right to require more depth of knowledge than someone like Mr. Watson was likely to possess.

Consistent with her attention to detail in her travel planning, her painting, and her geographical calculations, Anne described the social and cultural scenes she witnessed.

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<sup>186</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 21 Nov 1877.

<sup>187</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 21 Nov 1877.

Her observations and descriptions applied to all classes and races; she described Syrian town-dwellers with the same detail as desert Bedouins. On their way to Aleppo, Anne and Wilfrid stopped near Beilan/Tokat, where they stayed in a local home. Anne's descriptions of the home and the family provide an insight into the daily life of the town's inhabitants. The house itself was one square, vaulted, room, whitewashed, "very clean," and the floor spread with mats. The decorations were plaster ornaments, three of them like "huge stoves for storing corn; on one side was an arch in which stood a thing like a plaster sarcophagus with pigeon holes for putting away small objects. It also served as a shelf for mattresses and cushions, for "the family bedding." There was a fireplace that had an "ornamental chimney piece" that did not seem to be used for fire since the fire was made in a "brasero (mangal)."<sup>188</sup> The mistress of the house, Adouba, had an infant of approximately six months when the Blunts arrived. Her immediate response when they arrived, in keeping with the Arab tradition of hospitality, was to lay a mattress on the floor for them to sit on, then use twigs and start a fire in the mangal. Adouba fetched eggs, stopping once in a while to kiss her baby and call him, "Akhmet beg," and "ibni." Adouba fed her baby, put him in the cradle, and began to spin cotton. "Others of the family came and went and all seemed to worship Akhmet."<sup>189</sup> The spinning wheel Adouba used was shaped like a drum and made a droning sound. Anne fell asleep to its quiet noise, then woke up to see that their host, Halil, and his wife, Adouba, had rolled themselves up "in an heap" next to Akhmet's cradle and close to the fire. Anne and Wilfrid's side of the room must have been far from the fire because Anne wrote that it was bitterly cold and rain fell and wind blew all night.<sup>190</sup> Anne respected Adouba's

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<sup>188</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 8 December 1877.

<sup>189</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 8 December 1877.

<sup>190</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 8 December 1877.

efforts as a wife and mother, and Halil as a co-host and father. Adouba and Halil reinforced Anne's view of Arab hospitality as a core value in the Arab world.

Lady Anne showed her respect for Adouba and Halil's hospitality by sketching their house and their family. She drew the room in which she and Wilfrid spent the night. Adouba, Halil, and their family were most interested in Anne's sketch, anxiously waiting for her to finish so they could see the result. While Anne drew, Halil's father sat in the room near the door smoking a narghileh, with two or three youths, likely relatives, standing near him. Anne showed her sketch to her hosts when she finished, and they were pleased to see their home and family represented in her journal. Wilfrid gave the family money to show appreciation for their hospitality, then he and Anne set off toward Aleppo.<sup>191</sup> Anne appreciated the effort of Halil and Adouba, especially because she knew that entertaining a foreign couple was most unusual. Anne's understanding was an example of her developing worldview.

Anne had more appreciation for desert life, complete with its hardships, than she did for ocean travel. She normally found beauty and interest in all aspects of her journeys, but she had no love for the time she had to spend on the ocean en route to her destinations. She had written earlier, near Palermo, en route to Aleppo, that "sea life [is] a hideous monotony."<sup>192</sup> Anne's reluctance to leave home plagued her most on the journey toward her desert destinations. Between Palermo and Messina, the Blunts' ship encountered stormy weather. Anne described the scene and her own feelings:

Storm all night, preventing sleep, everything not tied trembling about... The wind worse and worse, thunder and lightning and hail. We were to have staid two hours. But after breakfast it was evident we were not to move for some hours. I suppose an English captain would not have allowed bad weather to keep him in

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<sup>191</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 9 December 1877.

<sup>192</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 23 November 1877.

port. I however am glad to get off as many hours of it as possible and am now, 4p.m., still sitting quietly (not comfortably for it is too cold) in the saloon, no sign of going yet. A strong scent of caramel from the service room, a tramping of heavy footsteps on deck overhead, and the doctor playing patiences at the other end of the long table. Such is the scene for which I have quitted my home.....<sup>193</sup>

Anne's reluctance to leave home made the rough sea journey even more unpleasant. Her attitude changed once she was on land and traveling toward the Arab world.

Lady Anne's response to current politics of the time provided a glimpse of her future commitment to political affairs in the region. Political news from home and from the region reached the Blunts during their travels via telegraph. Anne reported in her journal that the Turks were faring well in their battle with the Greeks, writing that Mehemet Ali had found success near Orkhanie.<sup>194</sup> En route to their destinations, Anne and Wilfrid encountered numerous interesting passengers. Anne often wrote accounts of conversations or dinners with assorted people from diverse parts of the world. Anne's ability to absorb the stories of a mixed culture is illustrated in a story she included in her journal.

The consul told us today a curious story of a young lady who not long ago eloped from her relations' house, at Smyrna, with a Turk and presented herself with the Turk before the Imam to be married wishing first to be received into the Mussulman faith. The Imam refused to allow this without referring to the Pasha. The Pasha sent for the young lady's relatives, Dutch people, and they all did what they could to dissuade her from carrying out her intention. She would not give in, but as a last resort the Pasha offered that she should remain for some time in his harem before taking any further step. He put the Turk she wanted to marry in prison for some days as a punishment for having given so much trouble. After four days of harem life the lady changed her mind. She and the Turk were made to shake hands and sign a document renouncing each other. ... The Turks certainly shewed no religious intolerance in this affair.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 26 November 1877.

<sup>194</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 30 Nov 1877.

<sup>195</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 30 Nov 1877.



Anne compared this story with another passenger's information about the supposed thieves and robbers in the city of Smyrna and its surrounding area, who were reported to be Greeks. The Greek plunderers were supposedly protected by the Greek consul. Anne did not make a direct comment, but implied that she was impressed by the conciliatory approach of the pasha—a Turk—as opposed to the greedy Greeks and their consular protector.<sup>196</sup>

Current events always caught Lady Anne's attention, and her journals reflect a summary of some of the time's pivotal events. While waiting to leave Smyrna, Anne heard news of Indian Muslims threatening to revolt after the fall of Kars. The Indians demanded that Britain defend Muslim Turkey, with war if necessary. The demands of Indian Muslims were a preview of Anne and Wilfrid's future involvement with the group in India six years later. With the reports of disturbances in India, Anne and Wilfrid considered the idea of rerouting their trip to Abyssinia, but Anne questioned the logic of that idea, believing that a trip to India would be more worthwhile.<sup>197</sup> Anne's innate political acumen was beginning to emerge, becoming more evident with each day of travel. She understood the close connection between India and the Muslims of the Arab world, but her concept of that connection would deepen with her later experiences.

Aleppo, the city that would prove to be one of their most important destinations, was Lady Anne and Wilfrid's gateway to the Arab world. With its location in Syria along ancient trade routes, Aleppo reflected both the presence of the Ottoman Empire and the current influence of European diplomatic efforts. As their journey took them over land and closer to Aleppo, Anne characteristically wrote first of the stony, muddy, ground, but

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<sup>196</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 30 Nov 1877.

<sup>197</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 1 December 1877. Anne and Wilfrid ultimately traveled to India.

near Aleppo, the soil became richer. In spite of the rich soil, she saw few crops and only a very few people in the area. With their Turkish experience fresh in her mind, Anne naturally wondered if the lack of agriculture was a result of imperial mismanagement. Anne's first sight of Aleppo was the ancient minaret of the citadel stretching toward the sky behind a hill. As they crested the hill, Anne commented about the beauty of the scenery, in spite of the stormy, cold weather. Aleppo sat in a valley of gardens with the citadel rising up in the middle of the city. Anne and Wilfrid stayed for the first few days in a European-owned hotel that Anne called a locanda. Anne wrote with obvious relief that they were able to bathe and change clothes for the first time in four days. Exhausted, Anne slept all afternoon, awakening just in time for dinner. Anne had described the hardships they endured as well as the beauty and hospitality they experienced. Her awakening from a long sleep was a metaphor for the significance that Aleppo would have in the coming days, after she and Wilfrid finally met the British Consul, James Henry Skene. Anne's journals, from this point forward, would reflect the useful purpose that she acquired for their future travels. Anne would evolve from an interested traveler to a traveler with the goal of finding noble Arab sheikhs and their desert horses, destinations that would make history and develop Anne's cosmopolitan worldview.

## **Chapter Four: Aleppo to Arabia and India**

Once in Aleppo, Anne and Wilfrid eventually met James Henry Skene,<sup>198</sup> the British consul, and his wife, who proved to be pivotal acquaintances for the Blunts. Anne and Wilfrid stayed with the Skenes after the latter invited them to leave their hotel and move into their home. Anne described their home as lovely, sitting on the bank of a stream, with a garden and a stable. The enclosed garden's ground had a grayish color and the area had several "ancient grottoes in it containing graves hewn in the rock, said to be of nuns as the house was once a convent. There are some bones here and there sticking out of the ground."<sup>199</sup> Anne's journal contains a lovely watercolor of the home on the stream, flanked by its gardens with a water wheel.

James Skene, the outgoing consul, provided Lady Anne and Wilfrid with what became the most important counsel and advice that they received from a western source. Skene possessed valuable knowledge of the existing tribes of Arabia at that time. He advised the Blunts "to approach the [Arabs] on their nobler side, and putting aside all fear to trust them as friends, appealing to their law of hospitality."<sup>200</sup> Skene appealed to

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<sup>198</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 10 December 1877. James Henry Skene, "Mr. Skene," is a prominent figure in Anne's diaries in the late 1870's. The Blunts owed much of their early success with the Bedouin tribes to Skene's knowledge and connections. Anne and Mr. Skene discovered that they were distant relatives—fourteenth cousins—through a connection with the Lovelaces. Anne gave a short biographical sketch of Mr. Skene: "Mr. Skene is over sixty and served five years in the army, 73<sup>rd</sup> foot. After that he was at Cephalonia and Zante from about 1845 to 1848. In 1852, he was made vice Consul at Constantinople and in 1855 Consul at Aleppo. He was sent to help in the organization of irregular cavalry in the same year and was General Vivian's secretary. General Vivian commanding the Turkish contingent—so that Mr. Skene saw a great deal of the Crimean War." See also, LAB journals, add mss 53889, 11 Dec 1877, followed by lovely water color 12 Dec, picturing the Skene's house.

<sup>199</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 11 December 1877. The 13 December entry includes Anne's lovely water color of the Citadel of Aleppo, with a note that reads, "The great tower was built by a king Dakar (Malak ed Dakar), the son-in-law of Saladin. He used to sit at the window above the arch."

<sup>200</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), 27. James Henry Skene was a consul with many years' experience in the region and provided the

Anne's innate egalitarian sense of justice in assessing people and their culture. Anne, Wilfrid and Skene discussed the tribes as they existed at the time; the numbers of the tribes, their approximate population, horses and camels, and their "mode of government, which is pure republican in their places of abode."<sup>201</sup> Anne's natural tendency toward cosmopolitanism easily absorbed Skene's pragmatic and respectful knowledge of Arabs and their culture. Anne's later political activities were grounded in the firsthand education she received under Skene's tutelage followed by her desert experience.

In addition to the educational sessions with Skene, Lady Anne used her time in Aleppo to prepare for the next, more ambitious part of their journey into Arabia. In Aleppo, activities for Anne and Wilfrid varied between being guests of the Skenes, looking at horses to purchase, either for their future stud in England or as transportation into Arabia, shopping for supplies for their journey, or political discussions. One day a man from the Austrian consulate called upon the Skenes with a report that Osman Pasha had escaped from Plevna. Anne and Wilfrid discussed with Skene the benefit this presented to Turkey, in that it would delay a Russian attack. Turkey was weak compared with Russia, and an attack would be difficult to defend. Mr. Skene told the Blunts that Turkey was "utterly ruined" due to the men having been taken away from their land to fight. Anne and Wilfrid had heard accounts of distressed Turkish people throughout the countryside. In one case, the tobacco tax collector traveled to a village that at first appeared abandoned. There were only a few women in the village, one of whom said, "Here we are, seven women left without any man and for God's sake, don't take away

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Blunts with a world of experience in their conversations with him. It was Skene who first suggested that the Blunts might want to breed purebred Arab horses instead of just importing a few for crossbreeding to produce Thoroughbreds or similar hybrid types. Skene also taught the Blunts one of their most valuable lessons: while they always provided gifts to take with them in the desert, they should never receive a gift. See also, Elizabeth Longford, *Pilgrimage of Passion* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 127.

<sup>201</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 20 December 1877.

our tobacco. We have nothing to eat and nothing else to sell.” The collector only took a small amount of tobacco and left the village.<sup>202</sup> Such a story provided Anne and Wilfrid with a grim view of daily life under Ottoman administration, and contributed to their view of empires as being detrimental to native inhabitants.

Ottoman administration required that foreign visitors apply for permission to visit the ancient Citadel and its mosque. Anne and Wilfrid successfully obtained permission from the pasha to see the Citadel, so they made a tour of it. Anne’s description of the structure illustrates the imposing nature of it. The Citadel occupied the top of a large, conical hill surrounded by a moat. From all sides the Citadel was an imposing structure with a large bridge that led through a passageway that was “steep, wide, and high.” The Blunts climbed up the minaret, “square and Byzantine,” where the view was unmatched. Anne’s reference to Byzantine was also a reflection of the building’s ancient religious diversity. Anne noted that she could see the valley of salt to the southeast, looking white like a lake in the distance. On their descent, they threw water into a well in which it took fifteen seconds to hear the water splash at the bottom.<sup>203</sup> Anne appreciated the long and varied history of the Citadel, with its connection to empires, invaders, religions, and emperors.

In the late nineteenth century, one of the political topics of importance was the practice of slavery. Slavery had been practiced in most of the Arab world for centuries,

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<sup>202</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 13 December 1877. This report, coupled with the reports Anne recorded in her journals four years earlier about the lack of productivity in the Turkish countryside, paints a grim picture of Turkish agriculture during this time period, whether caused by Tanzimat reforms or wars. There is no explanation of the identity of Mr. Anketell, who told Anne and Wilfrid the story of the overtaxed women of the village.

<sup>203</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 13 December 1877. An interesting observation of Anne’s is that the minaret of the Citadel was square and Byzantine, a reference to its mixed religious heritage, and evidence of the ancient crossroads of civilization in Aleppo.

and Aleppo was no exception. Anne's account of daily events was also an account of the leading issues of the day. One afternoon, after a ride out on the Diyarbakir road, Anne and Wilfrid had returned to the Skenes' house for tea and to change for dinner. After tea, a commotion accompanied the arrival of a black fugitive slave woman, who appeared at the door of the consulate. She asked for the protection of the consulate, telling a story of a harsh master who swore at her and treated her badly. She said her master had turned her out of his house, although he had originally paid ninety Turkish pounds for her. Skene disputed her story, saying that the price was too high according to the market. The woman was a Christian and the slave of a Christian. Skene would not allow her to stay at the British consulate, but she was allowed to stay at a servant's house until morning. The next day, she was shown to the Italian consulate. Anne wrote that in Aleppo, Christians were allowed to buy slaves and did buy slaves, but that the slaves are not the legal property of Christians.<sup>204</sup> Such a paradoxical arrangement, accepted as it was in Aleppo, did not arouse condemnation from Anne; she already exhibited her trademark ability to pragmatically acknowledge the values of another culture without losing her own.

The Arab world was a crossroad for civilizations and religions, and Anne's journals included accounts of visits to churches during their travels. One day, Anne and Wilfrid attended a Syrian Catholic church in Aleppo. Early on the morning of the church service, they heard the guns of the Muslim Bairam festival firing in celebration of the beginning of the holiday. The service Anne and Wilfrid attended lasted only twenty minutes, but Anne's description of it is interesting:

I had to go up into the gallery where women sit. It had a lattice of wood above the parapet, and as the gallery was light and the church was dark, I saw very little. I made out some incensing and the priests at the altar but that was all, and I could

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<sup>204</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 15 December 1877.

not discover anything I have seen in Catholic churches; the service is in Arabic, and Wilfrid, down below and nearer, heard the name of Allah several times. As we were walking back with the cavass, boys in a graveyard were slinging stones which whizzed past disagreeably near us. The Christian and Mussulman boys have sling fights.<sup>205</sup>

Anne was Catholic, so she looked for similarities to what she knew, but the fact that this church was different was interesting to her, and not strange or frightening. This church experience is an example of Anne's developing cosmopolitan view.

Ottoman administration in Syria during Lady Anne and Wilfrid's time included layers of officials. Dragomans, who were official interpreters and guides affiliated with the local or Ottoman government, were an integral part of the culture of nineteenth century life in the Arab world, especially in Syria. Because dragomans held official positions but could be hired by individuals, they were sometimes viewed as opportunistic by travelers to the region. Anne's assessment of one dragoman and his wife shows her insight and characteristic analysis of the people she met: "Mr. and Mrs. Tabit called, the latter a very good, simpleminded woman much liked by Mrs. Skene, the former a cunning dragoman."<sup>206</sup> By this time, Anne had experienced dragomans in Turkey, North Africa, and Syria. Possibly her judgment derived from the individual; possibly it derived from a general opinion of dragomans. Dragomans were a personification of the imperial system and the opportunities it provided for collaborators and agents.

An important long-term consequence of the time Anne and Wilfrid spent in Aleppo was their discussion with Skene about their plan of acquiring purebred Arab horses for export to England. Originally, this idea was part of Anne's plan to improve English Thoroughbreds for racing. Anne's ancestors owned the famous Milbanke Stud, a

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<sup>205</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 16 December 1877. Note: the Bairam festival is one of the Islamic festivals following Ramadan, also called Aid-al-fitr, and can refer to either the greater or lesser festival.

<sup>206</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 16 December 1877.

prominent Thoroughbred breeding and racing stable, so the idea of improving racehorses came naturally to Anne. Skene suggested that the Anne and Wilfrid try to start a purebred Arab breeding program in England as a way to improve the quality of the English breeds, while producing their own asil horses as well. If successful, such a horse farm, known in England as a stud, would be the first of its kind. Arab horses had had an impact on England in the past, with the Arabs of Lord Godolphin and the famous Darley Arabian, but the eastern blood of these horses existed only in their descendants as a mixture with indigenous English horses. British culture embraced fine horseflesh and the exotic east, so asil Arab horses seemed to be a natural fit.

Skene's idea of trying to gather Arab horses from the desert to start a breeding program in England was not a new one. A British military officer, Major Roger Dawson Upton, had gathered a few desert Arab horses a few years earlier, but the horses either died or did not produce offspring, so the project had to be abandoned. Other attempts to breed Arab horses on English soil had failed as well, so the risk was significant. In spite of the risks, Anne liked the idea and she and Wilfrid decided to pursue it. They all agreed to keep it a secret until the plan materialized. The pursuit of the highest quality horses the desert had to offer meant that Anne and Wilfrid needed to find and follow the great Anazeh tribe on its path to central Arabia.<sup>207</sup> A project of such magnitude also required that the Blunts create a plan for caring for the horses they proposed to purchase in the desert, and then transporting them to England. With secrecy at the core of their plan,

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<sup>207</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 14 December 1877, asil is a word for "pure," and is often used in the context of purebred, rather than crossbred, Arab horses. The significance of this idea stems from the success of the English Thoroughbred race horse, created through the cross-breeding of indigenous English horses with Arab horses of the East. Keeping Arab blood pure in its own right was a novel idea, especially given the reluctance of Arabs and Ottoman leadership to allow the export of mares. Anne's Milbanke relatives had a successful Thoroughbred stud, and her mother, Ada, was a horse-racing enthusiast. See also Donna Landry, *Noble Brutes: How the Eastern Horse Changed English Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2009), .



Anne wrote to her brother, Ralph, describing the essence of the plan, asking him to keep the information to himself. Wilfrid did the same in writing to Nep Wheatley, his brother-in-law, who had a farm in England, also asking him to keep the information confidential. Both men were initial partners in the project, and Nep could keep the horses as they arrived in England before Wilfrid and Anne returned.<sup>208</sup> As Anne and Wilfrid established their plans to import asil horses from the Arab world, they had to explain their trip to other family and friends without revealing its true purpose. “We shall say we are going with Mr. Skene on an excursion to Deir, and after that may see something of Arab life in that part of the country or perhaps go on to Bagdad...” Wilfrid told Nep as follows:

...that he meant to go to India but had given that up finding from Mr. Skene that there is a unique opportunity of doing two things he has long thought of, first of going to central Arabia, second of getting some of the true breed of Arab mares from which came the Darley Arabian—that Mr. Skene is the only man who knows the Anazeh well enough to be able to manage this; that he retires with a pension this year and is going to say goodbye to the Anazeh at Deir, that we shall accompany him, that the Arabs want corn, which is dear this year, and will probably sell horses.

That if we find what we like we should buy three or four mares in foal and a horse, and send them home before March, when the mares should foal. After this, we might go on with the Anazeh on their annual migration to Nejd and come back with them in spring. Mr. Skene would be with us and having had opportunities of protecting the Arabs, they would probably do the same for him.<sup>209</sup>

Anne cited other reasons for keeping their plans quiet, besides the business consideration of the horse stud. Of the other reasons for discretion, she wrote that if family and friends

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<sup>208</sup> Elizabeth Longford, *A Pilgrimage of Passion* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 128.

<sup>209</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 17 December 1877. Previous importations from the Arab world had usually been stallions, with few if any mares, and certainly not both, which would constitute a true breeding program. The few that Roger Upton imported did not reproduce, so the first attempt to form an Arabian horse breeding program in Britain met with failure. Anne added to her journals in later years, sometimes correcting or updating information. In one such instance, Anne added a note to the entry in the margin of her journal, dated 1913, in which she wrote, speaking of the migration of the Anazeh, “they never get so far south now!” The reference to the Darley Arabian indicates Anne’s initial interest in Thoroughbreds, since the Darley was one of the progenitors of the Thoroughbred breed in the early eighteenth century.

at home knew the length and depth of their travels into Arabia, they would fear that the Blunts would be in danger. People would also assume that the Blunts would be suffering great fatigue. Anne writes that Mr. Skene's presence would mitigate the former, and the traditionally slow travel of the Anazeh would preclude the latter.<sup>210</sup>

Anne recorded another benefit to making the long trek that she and Wilfrid planned to make. Wilfrid had said to Anne that "if they could make this journey, it would be the first thing of the kind ever done, and [they] should get the [Royal] geographical society's gold medal."<sup>211</sup> Anne projected their return in April, possibly later, but hoped to be back in England in time for Derby Day in May. Anne and Wilfrid's desire for a prestigious award from the Royal Geographical Society, as well as being present for a big event like Derby Day, provides evidence of the Blunts' easy transition between cultures and shows their ability to maintain their English roots while establishing parallel, cosmopolitan, roots in the east. Setting the goal of winning the Royal Geographic Society's gold medal also set the tone of Anne's journals. For the Arabia trips, she recorded geographical data along with her own observations. Her political acumen was developing, but did not fully emerge until her later experience in Egypt. For the Arabia trip, the useful purpose for Anne was the opportunity to gather knowledge of a largely unknown world, and to impart that knowledge in her homeland. In the process, she also hoped to find the eastern horses of her dreams.

Preparations for the long journey to the Arab world included having tents made for the trip. Anne wrote of their tent that they chose an unbleached linen, due to having

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<sup>210</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 17 December 1877.

<sup>211</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 17 December 1877. Setting the goal of winning the Royal Geographical Society's gold medal was an indication of Lady Anne and Wilfrid's appreciation of their homeland and their willingness to contribute to its geographical knowledge of a virtually unknown region. This is another example of Anne's Englishness as she was acquiring, or broadening, her cosmopolitan nature.

few choices for the outside fabric. For the inside lining, her description revealed her knowledge of paint colors, as she referred to the fabric as “thin red stuff dyed of a beautiful madder colour.”<sup>212</sup> Anne sat almost daily with the Jewish family of tentmakers in Aleppo, as they crafted the tents she helped design for their journey. Other preparations included deciding who should comprise the traveling party. Skene planned to take one servant, the Blunts would take a cook, and Skene recommended one Arab as a guide, a Hammadi sheikh named Seyd Ahmed, who was friendly with all of the tribes they planned to visit.<sup>213</sup> Plans for the trek into the desert underscored the importance of the lengthy acquaintance made between the Blunts and the Skenes. The information, ideas, and attitudes that Anne and Wilfrid developed through their association with the Skenes formed the basis of their eastern activities and attitudes for the rest of their lives.

Anne recorded Seyd Ahmed’s biographical sketch. He was fifty or fifty-five years old and lived six hours south of Aleppo in a house he recently built. Prior to building his house, he lived in a tent. He and his Hammadi tribe were imported to the area approximately fifty years ago by Ibrahim Pasha, the son and general in Egyptian Viceroy Muhammad Ali’s army. Ibrahim wanted the Hammadi to act as a modifying factor for the powerful Anazeh tribe. Since that time, the tribes had intermarried and had become friendly. Anne wrote her characteristic assessment of Seyd Ahmed, “I rather liked him. There is a medley of ugliness, good nature, greed of gain, intelligence, and cunning in his face, and he can understand a joke. I think it would not be difficult to get on with him.”

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<sup>212</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 17 December 1877. Madder red refers to an ancient color used in Egypt and derived from a root-based dye.

<sup>213</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 17 December 1877. Ibrahim Pasha was Viceroy Muhammad Ali’s son, as well as his most talented general.

Anne also found the Arabic of Seyd Ahmed much easier to understand than “the town Arabic of Aleppo.”<sup>214</sup>

Seyd Ahmed described the road to Deir in daily segments, the hours for which Anne made a calculation. She estimated a total of seventy-seven hours of travel from Aleppo to Deir. Skene was on the brink of retirement from consular service at the time he planned to accompany Anne and Wilfrid to Deir, a city on the road toward the Arabian Desert. Once Skene reached Deir, he had to return to Aleppo to welcome the new British consul who was to replace himself. Anne and Wilfrid traveled from Deir on to Baghdad on their own, providing them with their first independent trip in Arabia.

#### **BAGHDAD AND ARABIA**

After bidding Consul Skene farewell in Deir, Lady Anne and Wilfrid made their way toward Baghdad. The great distances required to travel deep into the Arab world began to emerge as Anne and Wilfrid’s plans took shape. Establishing their goals for their ambitious trip to Arabia, Anne and Wilfrid discussed with Seyd Ahmed the possibility of meeting Jedaan, the prominent sheikh of the Anazeh. Searching for a specific tribe and a specific sheikh in a vast desert was a challenging prospect. There were dangers involved in meeting hostile tribes or rogue highwaymen; there were also inherent dangers in the harsh environment. Seyd Ahmed reported that he heard that Jedaan had been killed during one of a series of battles with the Ruala, a tribe that had once been a part of the Anazeh confederation. It was unusual for Anazeh tribes to fight

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<sup>214</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 18 December 1877. Seyd Ahmed’s sense of humor was apparent when he was discussing horses for each person to ride on the journey. Of a particular horse, Mr. Skene inquired whether or not it could carry him, to which Seyd Ahmed replied, “it could carry the beg (Wilfrid), or the sitt (Anne), but you, Mr. Skene, are as heavy as a mountain.” Anne’s Arabic had improved enough to give her a measure of confidence with the language, as had Wilfrid’s, but they knew that separating from Skene left them vulnerable in their first real trip into the heart of Arabia.

with each other; in this case, the reported reason for a fight was that the Ruala ceased the customary migration to the south. As a wealthy and aristocratic tribe, the Ruala were known for their fine horses, camels, and sheep. The Anazeh suspended their tradition of not fighting amongst themselves in the case of such a tribe's having suspended a custom as traditional as the migration; if the Ruala did not migrate, then they would not need the number of horses, camels, and sheep they traditionally kept. The Anazeh attacked the Ruala for their sheep and camels in two successful raids; in a third raid, Jedaan was reportedly killed. Anne noted hopefully that the news of Jedaan's death might not be true since the news of it traveled from such a great distance. It was also unusual for raids to involve a death; they were usually intent on gaining livestock.<sup>215</sup> Anne's optimism and intuition proved correct because she later wrote of the encounter with Jedaan, including a sketch of him.

When they finally reached Baghdad, Lady Anne and Wilfrid stopped at the Residency and visited with the British physician, Dr. Colville. Colville discussed with them the current health issues, such as the fact that plague and cholera epidemics that seemed to revisit the cities every thirty years. The devastation of such epidemics was astonishing, especially in urban areas, and he hoped they could avoid a recurrence. Colville said that Bedouins never had the plague, but that cholera made no distinctions.<sup>216</sup> He believed, though, that fresh air and exercise were valid preventive measures against the plague. Following the health interview with Dr. Colville, Anne recorded what she had learned of the demographic census of Baghdad at the time: 70,000 Mohammedans, 2,000 Christians, 18,000 Jews. Of the Mohammedans, 7,000 were Turks, Persians, and Indians.

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<sup>215</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 18 December 1877. Anne wrote in a note dated only as "later," that the report of the Ruala's not migrating south was a mistake; they do migrate south.

<sup>216</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54075, 13 February 1878.

The remainder were Arabs. On a broader census scale, Anne wrote, “The Bedouin is, if anything, Suni, the settled Arab Shia, the Bagdadi Suni.”<sup>217</sup> Anne already understood that there were different cultures in nomadic communities from those of urban areas. Some of these observations were part of her published book, *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates*. Anne’s usual pragmatic outlook allowed her to absorb information about the coexistence of foreign religions and nationalities, and to record the information as a matter of fact. Such knowledge and experience contributed to Anne’s eventual inclusive and pragmatic worldview.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid, on their own for the first time in the Arab world, proceeded with caution, especially when they ventured close to towns.<sup>218</sup> Foreign travelers were often spies, and Anne and Wilfrid did not want to arouse suspicions.<sup>219</sup> They had acquired letters of introduction from leading sheikhs, but they traveled with their own names as “persons of distinction.” As Wilfrid wrote, “we were therefore everywhere received with smiles, Anne’s presence contributing much to the good feeling shown, for in all Moslem lands the visit of a lady of apparent rank is held to be an honour conferred on the entertainer over and above the common honour of a male guest received.”<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54075, 13 February 1878.

<sup>218</sup> This reference to Lady Anne and Wilfrid being on their own in the Arab world is intended to distinguish this journey from the previous ones in North Africa, Egypt, and Sinai. The previous journeys were remote, and Lady Anne and Wilfrid were on their own, but their pathways were not as unusual; there were many travelers traversing some of those desert trails. Anne and Wilfrid had traveled with Mr. Skene to Deyr, and from there they relied on their own knowledge and experience. Each area of the Arab world had its own culture and local rules and rulers. This trip was their most ambitious to date, in that they had to maneuver in lands that were largely beyond Ottoman control and minimally influenced by Europeans.

<sup>219</sup> The previous well-known travelers, such as Carlo Guarmani and Georg Wallen, were horse agents on purchasing missions, but there is considerable speculation that they were also gathering military information for their sponsors. Anne and Wilfrid knew that traveling in search of horses was not always considered a legitimate reason for being in a foreign land.

<sup>220</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, 15.

After Lady Anne and Wilfrid left Baghdad, they traveled through the desert toward the village of Tikrit. Anne observed Tikrit from a safe distance, commenting in her journal, “I would not go into the town, a dingy little place something like Deir but with no minaret or bazaar. I wanted to keep clear of the Mudir and his soldiers.”<sup>221</sup> One of the risks that faced Anne and Wilfrid was the accusation of being a spy. So many European travelers, in fact nearly all of them, ventured into the east as a patron for a client, or for some purpose that would be to the traveler’s advantage. Arabs were wary of such potential spies or invaders, the fact of which Lady Anne and Wilfrid were keenly aware. This experience contributed to Anne’s ability to perceive the Arabs’ view of international influence, a component of her own worldview.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid drew closer to the camp of the first Shammar Sheikh they intended to meet, Sheikh Multany. Anne’s mare was lame, so she rode her camel, on which she chased, and then shot, a jackal. In the same account, Anne noted that they passed “a very handsome khan with Saracenic horseshoe gateway and beyond this another Jebouri camp.”<sup>222</sup> Finally, Anne saw a sentry on a hill, and upon approaching him, she asked him where she and her party could find the Shammar. The man was vague at first, giving Anne little information. She asked him if he were a Shammar, to which he responded with, “no.” Anne continued to press him for his own identity or tribe, inquiring whether or not he was a jabouri or a Zoba. Finally, she asked him specifically, “Where is Sheikh Multani?” The man finally acknowledged that he was part of the greater Multani clan, a tribe called Asslan, with Sheikh Hadmoul as their leader. The Multani and their

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<sup>221</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54075, February or early March, 1878 (no specific date given). Note that Tikrit was the home of the late president of modern Iraq, Saddam Hussein.

<sup>222</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54075, 3 March 1878.

sheikh were away on a ghazu against the Anazeh and their leader, Jedaan.<sup>223</sup> The man to whom Lady Anne spoke had likely never seen a western woman, even less likely spoken to one. Once they communicated successfully and established their credentials to visit the sheikh of the Asslan, Anne and Wilfrid were escorted to Sheikh Hadmoul's tent. Sheikh Hadmoul received Anne and Wilfrid with gracious hospitality, explaining that the Asslan contributed 1000 khayal to Multani, Akid of the Shammar, to take with him to the ghazu. Anne noticed that in the absence of this substantial number of men and animals, the Asslan appeared to be a poor clan. Hadmoul extended his hospitality to accompany Anne and Wilfrid on their journey to their next stop, that of Ferhan, another Shammar sheikh.<sup>224</sup>

This first trip into Arabia had the benefit of helping Anne and Wilfrid learn the vastness of the Arabian Desert, and the lack of predictability of the location of the tribes they wanted to visit. They did not meet all of the sheikhs and tribes they intended to meet on this first Arabian desert trek, but they made important acquaintances that established their credibility and paved the way for their most successful trip to Arabia a few months later.

In the late fall of 1878, Anne and Wilfrid returned to Arabia for their most ambitious trip and the one they took without any outside assistance. The previous trip, which began with Skene's assistance, was, in essence, Anne and Wilfrid's training mission. This second trip was most important, and the one on which they intended to achieve their goals. They were determined to find the sheikhs of the horse-breeding tribes, including Muhammad Rashid, sheikh of the Rashids, rivals of the Wahhabi allies,

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<sup>223</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54075, 3 March 1878. Ironically, Jedaan was one of the sheikhs Anne and Wilfrid wished to visit, but they had to wait until their next trip to Arabia several months later.

<sup>224</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54075, 3 March 1878.



the clan of the al Sauds. The searches Anne and Wilfrid made for Jedaan of the Anazeh and later Faris, Sheykh of the Shammar tribe, during these two long trips, reflected the reality of trying to pinpoint the location of a nomadic tribe in the vast deserts of Arabia. The process of making these searches involved meeting many other sheikhs along the way, giving Anne the opportunity to meet and assess numerous Arabs in the region. Anne was also the first European woman the Arabs had ever seen, and their hospitality to her as a foreign stranger was one of Anne's positive impressions of Arabs. Anne often compared cultures in the east with those in Britain.

During their second, and more in-depth trip to Arabia in 1878 and 1879, Anne and Wilfrid set out once again in search of the major horse breeding tribes of the region. When she and Wilfrid arrived in the Arab city of Jof in 1879, they followed their guide, Muhammad, to the house of his relative, Husseyn, who immediately extended his hospitality to the travelers and their entourage, both native and foreign. When another Arab relative joined the group, he expressed indignation toward the cousin's choice of relatives to host the foreign travelers, and declaring that he should have been selected as their host. Anne wrote in her journals:

I should like to know who in England, if a party of people headed by a distant relation from the end of Scotland or Ireland, would be ready to quarrel for the possession and entertainment of the guests and their servants, horses, etc. Here people delight in relatives dropping, as it were, from the clouds.<sup>225</sup>

This comment was a profound comparison for Anne to make with her British homeland. It was an important landmark in the development of her concept of the world as an

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<sup>225</sup> Rosemary Archer and James Fleming, ed., *Lady Anne Blunt, Journals and Correspondence, 1878-1917* (Cheltenham: Alexander Heriot, 1986), 64. Anne's journals from her trips to Arabia contain comparisons between Arab hospitality and British hospitality, in a manner intended to demonstrate, or at least record, the quality of hospitality, if not a superior form of hospitality, that permeated Bedouin Arab culture.

egalitarian entity. She always expressed her appreciation for the legendary Arab hospitality, but this occasion created a more intense impression on her.

Anne and Wilfrid finally made their way to the large and powerful desert tribe, the Shammar. There they met the sheikh of the Shammar, Faris, through whom they increased their knowledge about the ways of the Bedouin in Arabia. For example, in describing Faris, she wrote:

...we turned and saw a man who would at once be singled out as out of the common. He is more my idea of what a Bedouin Sheykh should be than any I have yet seen. He is rather good-looking with black hair very carefully and smoothly plaited, very white teeth, and pleasant eyes...<sup>226</sup>

On the first day they met Faris, Anne wrote in her journal that he said to her and to Wilfrid, "This is your house, these are your people."<sup>227</sup> Arab hospitality and manners had a profound effect on Anne and confirmed her positive impression of the character of Arab people.

In contrast to her impressions of Faris, Anne wrote of their meeting, a few weeks later, Jedaan, the sheikh of the Meheyd tribe. Jedaan, while cordial to the Blunts,

...has a dignified manner but his appearance wants the distinction of a thoroughbred aseel person such as Faris and he is in fact of no family—a parvenu. He is said to have been handsome but this I can hardly picture to myself, for the traces of beauty could not have been lost at the age of forty-five or at most fifty. There is not a single regular feature in his face. The nose seems rather aquiline but coarse, the mouth not good, the eyes very large and brilliant but with the fierce brightness of the eyes of a bird of prey.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Rosemary Archer and James Fleming, ed., *Lady Anne Blunt, Journals and Correspondence, 1878-1917* (Cheltenham: Alexander Heriot, 1986), 21.

<sup>227</sup> Archer and Fleming, *Journals and Correspondence*, 21.

<sup>228</sup> Archer and Fleming, *Journals and Correspondence*, 33. [Note: The term thoroughbred, with the lower case "t" indicates a synonym with the word, "aseel," meaning pure, as in purebred. The term, Thoroughbred refers to a specific breed of horse developed in England and used worldwide for racing]. Anne could use this term interchangeably for horse or for people, with an overall respect for the purity and quality that aseel indicates.

Anne's assessment of people became a characteristic of her journal writing. She developed a consistent formula for identifying quality in people, similar to those in Arab horses.

At another meeting in the Hauran district, near the medieval village of Melakh, Anne and Wilfrid visited the house of a Druse sheikh, Huseyn al Atrash. Anne wrote about him:

Huseyn is a fine specimen of a Druse sheikh, a man of about forty, extremely dark and extremely handsome, his eyes made darker and more brilliant by being painted with kohl...He begged us to come in, and then the coffee pots and mortar were set to work and a dinner was ordered. The Sheykh's manners were excellent, very ceremonious but not cold...The cookery and the people remind us of the frontier towns of the Sahara, everything good of its kind, good food, good manners, and good welcome. Then when we had all eaten heartily down to the last servant, he asked us who we were.<sup>229</sup>

These desert meetings with Jedaan, Faris and Huseyn al Atrash, the Arab people and their horses—the impetus for the Blunts' travels in the desert—became the metaphor for the broad knowledge and understanding that Anne and her husband gained from their associations in these lands largely unknown to westerners. Without losing her roots, Anne knew she was a part of the broader world of the east and she was happy to share it with her Arab neighbors.

The uniqueness of the Blunts' journeys in Arabia cannot be overstated. Explorer and scientist David George Hogarth analyzed their contribution:

The other party [reference to the Blunts] remains unique among exploring parties in Arabia; for not only did it contain a European lady, but it journeyed for no express scientific, commercial, or political end, but rather from a romantic curiosity and imaginative sympathy with Bedawin society.

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<sup>229</sup> Lady Anne Blunt, *A Pilgrimage to Nejd* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1983), 58. Melakh was an ancient village with medieval ruins near the Syrian border.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, diplomatist and poet, and his wife, granddaughter of the poet Byron, both of whom had been initiated into desert life...among the Anaze and Shammar tribesmen...conceived a desire to see the head and centre of the purest Arab breeds of humanity and horseflesh.

Hogarth continued by referring to the connection between the Blunts' guide, Muhammad ibn Arak, and the House of Rashid. The former wished to pursue his Arab relatives in search of a wife, and agreed to guide Lady Anne and Wilfrid for the dual purposes of searching for his wife and for their horses. Both searches led to Hail and Muhammad Ibn Rashid, to whom Lady Anne and Wilfrid appealed on the basis of their previous noble visits. Ibn Rashid risked his own supremacy by extending hospitality to the foreigners, especially to a foreign woman, because Europeans were viewed as intruders by the townsmen of Rashid's clan.<sup>230</sup> Anne did not view Arabs with fear, nor did she adjust her own frame of reference in her assessment of them or in the way she presented herself to them.<sup>231</sup> She was honest and respectful of the Arabs and their traditions, while participating in a truly unique accomplishment. Lady Anne was developing her own

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<sup>230</sup> David George Hogarth, *Penetration of Arabia*, 254. Hogarth explains further that while the narrative of the Blunts was unpretentious in its purpose, it is nonetheless as valuable as any other. He commended the Blunts' commitment to 'sobriety and accuracy and, as well as for observation and sympathy.' He regarded Lady Anne Blunt's journals, along with the comments by Wilfrid, as 'much more valuable contributions to geographical science than they claim to be, and cannot be neglected even where such close observers of Arab life as Palgrave, Guarmani, and Doughty have recorded their experiences...' Anne and Wilfrid were technically amateurs who contributed quality information about Arabia and its people. Hogarth credited the Blunts with correcting misinformation recorded by Georg Walling and Gifford Palgrave, another endorsement of the Blunts as quality explorers. (p. 167). David George Hogarth (1862–1927) was an archaeologist and traveler, former director of the Ashmoelan Museum, war correspondent, and Arabist. David Gill, 'Hogarth, David George (1862–1927)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 27, 537.

<sup>231</sup> The meaning of this statement is intended to emphasize Lady Anne's unusual ability to assess indigenous people in their own homeland, without trying to place them in the context of her own country. Most travelers of this time described Arabs scientifically, or as a curiosity, but Anne saw individual Bedouin Arabs as integral parts of a nomadic, desert, life, that did not seem to need foreign improvement or intervention.

egalitarian lens through which she observed the Arab world and worked to influence its future.

By the time Anne and Wilfrid had spent time in the desert with most of the major tribes of Arabia, Mesopotamia, Sinai, and Syria, they had a distinctly different perspective for assessing town, or urban Arabs, and the desert Bedouin Arabs. Of the Bedouin, the Blunts saw them in what could later be termed the height of their civilization in modern times. Bedouin tribal government was, as Anne wrote, wholly republican; outside influences had had little effect, or corruption as it was sometimes called, on their culture.<sup>232</sup> The Blunts witnessed Bedouin culture in a nearly cosmopolitan context, giving Anne an opportunity to witness Arab culture in a pure form. She and Wilfrid took this knowledge and worldview with them on their first trip to India in 1878. In India, the Blunts witnessed the British Empire at work as they visited a variety of native Indian villages and cultures.

#### **ARABIA TO INDIA, 1878-1879**

By 1878, Lady Anne and Wilfrid had established a pattern of traveling in the east during the winters, then returning home to England in late spring for the summer and early fall. They made two major trips to India, the first in 1878, at the invitation of their close friend, Robert Lytton, who was Viceroy of India at that time. Their second trip, in 1883, would differ dramatically, due in part to the fact that Lytton was no longer viceroy, and that Anne and Wilfrid's political experience had given them a more sophisticated worldview by their second trip. This initial trip to India, combined with the exceptional experiences of North Africa, Syria, and Arabia, provided the foundation for what became

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<sup>232</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53889, 17 December 1877. Conversation between Skene and the Blunts in Aleppo (previously mentioned, but relevant here as well).

Anne's cosmopolitan worldview and her political efforts to win liberty and justice for Egyptians, Arabs, Indians, or any other indigenous nation that strove for its independence.

Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, Viceroy of India, and his wife, Edith, had invited the Blunts to visit them in the government's summer headquarters at Simla.<sup>233</sup> The Lyttons and the Blunts were lifelong friends and Sussex neighbors. Lady Anne and Wilfrid planned their Simla visit to follow what became their boldest and most dangerous trip to the east, traveling from Arabia through Persia to India.<sup>234</sup> Their arrival in Simla gave the Blunts a welcome respite from an arduous journey that included Wilfrid's serious illness, injuries to both of them, dangerous highwaymen, and deprivation. The easy life of the Indian highlands provided the Lyttons and the Blunts ample opportunity for social activity, discussion of politics, and gave the Blunts a look at Indian and British imperial culture.

When Britain's East India Company had established its trading empire in India, the reigning political power was the Muslim Moghul monarchy. The Company's, then Britain's, process of granting favored status and privileges to Hindus or Muslims resulted in greater division between the two predominant religious groups as they competed for political power. Both groups experienced both the favors and the retribution at the hands of the Company, eventually creating discord among Indians. The defining moment in Britain's relationship with India in the nineteenth century was the Indian revolt of 1857. After the revolt, India became a colony of the British Empire instead of a trading colony.

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<sup>233</sup> David Washbrook, 'Lytton, Edward Robert Bulwer-, first earl of Lytton (1831–1891)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 34, 987.

Lytton succeeded Lord Northbrook as viceroy in 1876.

<sup>234</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936.

The long-term effects of the insurrection included a constant, if sometimes subconscious, fear of revolt that permeated subsequent imperial Indian administrations. The revolt defined British policy in India from the middle of the century onward, the consequences of which Lady Anne and Wilfrid witnessed two decades later.

India provided Lady Anne and Wilfrid with an established bridge between Britain and the east, and a place for them to see imperial policy at work. Lytton confided in Anne and Wilfrid on the subjects of British policy and finance in India, giving them their most in-depth picture of Britain's imperial interests there, which ultimately provided background for their views in Egypt and their future trip to India. Knowledge of the empire's interests also gave Anne and Wilfrid the idea of investigating the empire's effect on the Indian people. It was in India that the Blunts first became acquainted with Hindu and Muslim leaders, learning firsthand what impact the British administration had on Indian culture. These early contacts provided the basis for their future political discussions and Anne's and Wilfrid's attempts to help mitigate the negative effects of imperial administration on the Indian people.

The Lyttons and the Blunts discussed the idea that Lady Anne and Wilfrid should pursue further desert travels and use their Arab connections for the benefit of British interests in the region. Britain had been engaged in what became known as "the great game," or a political scramble for influence in central Asia. In a similar scenario, Anne and Wilfrid would deliver messages and gifts from the British government to the Sheikhs in the Hejaz and other regional Arab leaders. The Blunts would also report to their government any pertinent facts about the geography, tribes, alliances, numbers, location, and other data.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 61.

Before any of the proposed intelligence missions could gain momentum, Lytton resigned his position as Viceroy of India. His administration experienced harsh criticism after the devastating Indian famine, for which Lytton's policies were partially blamed, and the failed Afghan War. Lytton's sudden resignation interrupted his plan to engage Lady Anne and Wilfrid's services for British government intelligence gathering. Wilfrid wrote later that he was glad that these plans did not materialize because his trip to India provided the catalyst for his subsequent change of heart toward the British Empire.<sup>236</sup> This first trip to India, following as it did the trips to North Africa and Arabia, was a critical element in forming what became Lady Anne's cosmopolitan worldview and her commitment to liberty and justice for the people of the east and Arab world.

While they were in Simla, Lady Anne and Wilfrid met with the John Stracheys and the Alfred Lyalls, who served as minister of finance and foreign secretary, respectively, and learned a "course of instruction on Indian finance and Indian economics, the methods of dealing with famines, the land revenue, the currency, the salt tax, and the other large questions then under discussion..." Wilfrid expressed his dismay and disillusionment to Lytton, who replied once in a wryly cheerful moment that the British government in India was "a despotism of office boxes tempered by an occasional loss of keys."<sup>237</sup> Wilfrid wrote that he and Anne discovered that the surprising results of these lessons in Simla were the gradual erosion of their faith in the British government as the "honest and faithful guardian of native interests."<sup>238</sup>

I am disappointed with India, which seems just as ill-governed as the rest of Asia, only with good intentions instead of bad ones or none at all. There is just the same heavy taxation, government by foreign officials, and waste of money one sees in

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<sup>236</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 61.

<sup>237</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 7.

<sup>238</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 62.



Turkey, only, let us hope, the officials are fools instead of knaves. The result is the same, and I don't see much difference between making the starving Hindoos pay for a cathedral at Calcutta and taxing Bulgarians for a palace on the Bosphorus. Want eats up these great Empires in their centralized governments, and the only way to make them prosper would be to split them up and let the pieces govern themselves.<sup>239</sup>

Wilfrid voiced the dawning of his cosmopolitan worldview that was simultaneously dawning on Anne as well. Neither of them anticipated such a dramatic change in their political view, so they expressed their change in different ways. Wilfrid began to publish his thoughts; Anne gradually became more candid in her description of her own views. Anne had chronicled all of the abuses and deprivations suffered by subjects of other empires; now it appeared that the British Empire was not immune to similar practices. Wilfrid spoke for both of them when he wrote poignantly:

I still believed, but with failing faith, in the good intentions, if no longer in the good results, of our Eastern rule, and I thought it could be improved and that the people at home would insist upon its being improved if they only knew.<sup>240</sup>

The shocking revelations in India continued. Lytton and his administration were strapped with a famine of epic proportions and the human suffering that it involved. Putting the Empire's interests at the top of the priority list became less and less possible for Lady Anne or Wilfrid:

The *natives*, as they call them, are a race of slaves, frightened, unhappy, and terribly thin. Though a good Conservative and a member of the Carlton Club I own to being shocked at the Egyptian bondage in which they are being held, and my faith in British institutions and the blessings of British rule have received a severe blow. I have been studying the mysteries of Indian finance under the 'best masters,' Government secretaries, commissioners, and the rest, and have come to the conclusion that if we go on *developing* the country at the present rate the

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<sup>239</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 62.

<sup>240</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, 63. Wilfrid developed his own cosmopolitan worldview and, like Anne, it was difficult for him to understand how his countrymen could consider rejecting such credible information. Anne and Wilfrid's frustration with British resistance to facts or knowledge is a recurring theme in his writings and in his journals.

inhabitants will have, sooner or later, to resort to cannibalism, for there will be nothing but each other left to eat.<sup>241</sup>

Lady Anne and Wilfrid viewed as dishonest the debt incurred by the imperial government in India to provide myriad improvements that the population did not particularly need or want, while taxing the starving people to pay for the sometimes-dubious infrastructure. They began to doubt the benefit to eastern people at the hands of their foreign masters. Anne and Wilfrid viewed the world from a cosmopolitan perspective and believed that the logic of viewing one's fellow men as human beings, regardless of their location, was a position anyone should understand.

Even though the above observations were made in India in 1879, they are central to understanding Lady Anne and Wilfrid's political and social metamorphosis during the following four years. Anne placed her convictions in the context of justice for fellow man—a cosmopolitan worldview—while Wilfrid placed his convictions in the context of holding the British Empire to a higher moral standard politically. British policy in India after the mutiny of 1857 centered on creating revenue through export trade, but the tax burden was still substantial for Indians. The Indian military and the British bureaucracy were important components of British imperial defense and administration, and their costs had to be absorbed by the Indian economy.<sup>242</sup>

Lady Anne and Wilfrid began to view the advantages of India for Britain against the advantages of Britain for India. They were able to make the connections between England, Egypt, Arabia, and India, and the Empire's effect on each of them. By the time Anne and Wilfrid became involved in Egyptian politics two years later, they used the same measure for the reciprocal advantages between Egypt and Britain. By that time,

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<sup>241</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 62.

<sup>242</sup> P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688-2000* (London: Longman, 2002), 288.

Anne had found her own voice in her journals, while Wilfrid had found his in print. Once Anne committed her thoughts to paper, it was not long before she began to serve actively in Egypt and England in support of her convictions. Both Anne and Wilfrid knew that their views would be less than popular, but neither anticipated that they would be considered disloyal to their country or even perceived by a few as traitors to their government. They did not realize that their cosmopolitan view would conflict on a deeply emotional level with an imperial form of nationalism. Lady Anne believed that, “The English nation too would be very much interested and sympathetic with the Egyptians in this matter.”<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>243</sup>LAB journals, add 53913, 15 December 1881, 49. Anne referred to what she believed would be English sympathy for an Egyptian parliament and representative government.

## **Chapter Five: Lady Anne and the Egyptian Revolution**

To the Cyprus intrigue are directly or indirectly referable half the crimes against oriental and North African liberty our generation has witnessed. It suggested the immediate handing over of Bosnia to Austria. It helped to frustrate a sound settlement in Macedonia. It put Tunis under the heel of France, and commenced the great partition of Africa among the European powers, with the innumerable woes it has inflicted on its native inhabitants from Bizerta to Lake Chad, and from Somaliland to the Congo. Above all, it destroyed at a critical moment all England's influence for good in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>244</sup>

I can govern the people without a soldier, but a ministry of foreigners or of a different religion can only govern them with military force.<sup>245</sup>

Egypt during its nationalist revolution period galvanized Lady Anne Blunt's commitment to political integrity and justice for native populations. The Egyptian revolution also ultimately defined what became a political career for Lady Anne. The revolution also arguably defined Wilfrid Blunt's political career, which was the frontline of their dual careers. By the time of the onset of political upheavals in Egypt, Lady Anne and Wilfrid had traveled in the east on increasingly ambitious journeys since 1873. By 1881, they had good Arabic language skills, in-depth knowledge of Islam, a close relationship with al Azhar's reformist mufti, Muhammad Abduh,<sup>246</sup> and they had broad

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<sup>244</sup> Lord Lytton, *Wilfrid Scawen Blunt*, 82. Anthony Lytton, Anne and Wilfrid's grandson, quoted this paragraph from his grandfather's diaries. Although Wilfrid wrote this quote, Lady Anne's writings repeatedly reinforce the same sentiments.

<sup>245</sup> Elbert E. Farman, *Egypt and Its Betrayal* (New York: Grafton, 1908), 240. Khedive Ismail made this statement to Farman, who was United States Consul General at Alexandria at the time of the bombardment. Farman and Wilfrid later corresponded. Farman wrote to Wilfrid explain the lack of American involvement in the conflict. He wrote of Nathaniel Rothschild's paying off America's interests in Egypt at a meeting in Cairo, in return for American silence. BLUNT mss/FARMAN, Elbert E., West Sussex County Archives, Chichester, UK, division of National Archives.

<sup>246</sup> Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 130. Muhammad Abduh represented several important aspects of the time in which he and the Blunts were connected to the Egyptian revolution. Abduh, an Egyptian native from a Nile Delta village, was born into what Hourani called "the creative class of modern Egypt: the village families of some local standing and with a tradition of learning and piety." He was well-educated in the Ahmadi Mosque in Tanta and Al Azhar in Cairo. After participating with nationalists in the Egyptian revolution, he was exiled from Egypt for three

knowledge of the people, culture, geography, and aspirations of North Africa, Syria, Arabia, and Egypt. Important to their travel experience was their unique ability to learn and absorb the culture and society of the places they visited.

With the imperial backdrop of the dubious Cyprus Convention of 1878, France and Britain unwittingly launched what became known as the “scramble for Africa” as they eventually attacked and occupied Tunisia and Egypt, respectively, after secret negotiations between them.<sup>247</sup> Few, if any, British subjects had such depth of knowledge of the Arab world at that time, coupled with the Blunts’ social and political connections. Anne and Wilfrid’s political connections gave them the acumen to connect the largely secret European meeting with the emerging political activities in Cairo two and three years later.

By the time that the consequences of the Cyprus Convention became evident in Cairo, Lady Anne had developed her knowledge of the Arab world, from across North Africa, through Egypt, Syria and Arabia. She had had ample time to compare the culture of the nomadic desert Arabs with that of settled town Arabs, who had more contact with Europeans, and both of these with British culture.<sup>248</sup> What she learned broadened her own

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years. After his return, consul-general Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, appointed him mufti of Cairo, a position which did not allow him to pursue revolutionary activities but did allow him intellectual opportunities.

<sup>247</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries, 1888-1914* (London: Martin Secker, 1932), xv. Blunt used this term as the title of the first part of his published diaries in 1919. This term, “Scramble for Africa” became a commonly used term after the publication of the pivotal book, *Africa and the Victorians*, by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, in 1961. The uncontested (by England) French invasion of Tunisia in the year before warships appeared in the Alexandria harbor, demonstrated beyond doubt to the Egyptian National Party that there was collusion between the two European powers. The appearance of such collusion provided extra impetus to the resistance to British hegemony.

<sup>248</sup> Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah, An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. N.J. Dawood (Princeton University Press, 1967), Bollingen Series, 94. Lady Anne’s assessment of Bedouins and town Arabs is reminiscent of the writings of the fourteenth century Muslim theologian, Muhammad Ibn Khaldun. Ibn Khaldun observed that sedentary, or town people, became accustomed to luxuries and worldly successes, which made them vulnerable to evil thoughts and actions. Bedouins, with their sparse lifestyle and constant movement in search of pastures and resources, maintained stronger

view of indigenous people, their values, and their methods of governing their populations in a way that worked for them. Her ability to relate her own culture with that of the foreign people she encountered provided the impetus for her cosmopolitanism and egalitarian worldview. Her work to convince the English public of the justice of the Egyptian cause was, in effect, an effort to make her British compatriots more cosmopolitan in their worldview.

The Blunts' aristocratic lineage and experience opened the doors to Whitehall and Parliament, but ultimately it could not mitigate the influence of the network of men on the spot, whose careers were rooted in the Foreign Office. These Foreign Officers, with their political contacts and active use of the press and telegraph, maneuvered much of the London government, policy, and media, from Cairo.<sup>249</sup> The Consul-General of Cairo, Edward Malet, and his mother, Laura Malet, were intimate friends of Lady Anne and Wilfrid. Lady Anne's journals record numerous days of tennis games, dinners, and correspondence between the Blunts and the Malets. She also records the political effects of Egypt's difficulty in servicing its foreign debt. During the previous decade, the Khedive Ismail had borrowed heavily on khedivial property from mostly British and French financiers, to fund ambitious capital improvements and the expensive grand opening ceremony for the Suez Canal. By 1879, the Khedive's personal bankruptcy became part of Egypt's national bankruptcy.<sup>250</sup> It was in this atmosphere that the Malets

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character. Ibn Khaldun wrote that Bedouins, compared with sedentary societies, had fewer "evil ways and blameworthy qualities."

<sup>249</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907).

<sup>250</sup> Peter Mansfield, *The British in Egypt* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), 6. Khedive Ismail initially procured foreign loans with his own lands as collateral, but in 1873, he was authorized to seek loans in Egypt's name. Once the government was insolvent, both the khedive's assets and Egypt's assets became part of the financial workout plan.

and the Blunts initially worked together to help Egyptians construct a financial and political plan. The Egyptians hoped to extract their government from the country's crushing debt, as well as establish their own political independence.

The latter part of the year 1881, and all of 1882, defined Lady Anne's political activities for the future. During this time, she was busy with many of the Muslim, village, and military leaders in Egypt, and those who led the Nationalist Party. Anne and Wilfrid met Colonel Ahmed Arabi Pasha on 14 December 1881. Arabi led what became the Nationalist Party's military and political revolutionary force. Anne writes, with her usual frankness, of his appearance and her initial judgment of his character.

He is tall and fat, with nothing to attract in his personal appearance, not a single good feature in his face, but a look of extreme earnestness that makes ugliness seem of no consequence. He seems to be a man who has set himself a task and who never loses sight of the main object of his life, considering himself the servant of that object—the welfare of others and not his own, the good (that is, good government) of his own country in particular. That he may be mistaken in details...I mean practical matters relating to European politics and the comparative power of the Powers of Europe.<sup>251</sup>

What distinguishes this quotation is that it demonstrates Lady Anne's comprehensive understanding of the international politics involved in extracting Egypt from Ottoman and European administration. She recognized Arabi's plainness as a potential setback for him in the world of glib politicians, but her own earnestness found his sincerity refreshing and central to his cause.

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<sup>251</sup> LAB journals, add 53913, 14 December 1881. See also Archer and Fleming, *LAB Journals 1878-1917*, 145. Lady Wentworth, nee Judith Blunt, wrote later that this quotation indicated that her mother did not like Arabi and that her father was the sole driving force behind their participation with the Nationalist Party. Anne's active involvement with the nationalists does not support Judith's assertion. Anne appreciated Arabi's "earnestness," and his appearance was just a matter of fact to her, not a criticism of him as a person. This quotation and more from Anne's journals belie the interpretation put forth by Judith, and indicate her efforts to discredit her father on many levels. See also, *The Authentic Arabian Horse*, by Lady Wentworth. More discussion about Lady Wentworth's relationship with her father and its impact on his legacy is discussed in Appendix A.

Lady Anne's assessment of Arabi concluded with the acknowledgement by Arabi himself, and confirmed by Anne, that while there may be details about which Arabi lacked knowledge, such as the power of the European Powers, what Arabi knew for sure was that the state of tyranny in which Egyptians lived was wicked and unbearable. The use of forced labor, known as the corvee, as well as the whip, known as the khurbaj, were particularly reprehensible, even though the intermittent use of them had existed for centuries.<sup>252</sup> Egyptian natives were most often the victims of arbitrary abuses, and would have no recourse under Turkish civil law. Arabi told Anne:

If an exhibition of tyrants had been held by all nations of the earth and 'if there had been millions of all degrees of wickedness and Egypt had seen only one specimen, the prize would have been awarded to him—Ismail Pasha,' that if Tewfik could he would follow in his father's footsteps.<sup>253</sup>

Arabi's view of the khedives provided Anne with a glimpse of internal Egyptian politics and the complexity involved in Egypt's many layers of political society.

Lady Anne helped Wilfrid, Arabi, and nationalist Egyptians with clarifying their goals and publishing their official programme and constitution. The Egyptians wanted representative government in a republican form, and they wanted well-educated, accountable courts and judges. They also demanded an end to the hated Capitulations in an effort to achieve a more egalitarian civil and political climate. Anne and Wilfrid assisted the Egyptians in their drive toward independence; and they were actively

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<sup>252</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 11.

<sup>253</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 14 December 1881. Lady Anne and Wilfrid held Khedive Ismail responsible for much of Egypt's financial difficulty due to his apparently irresponsible borrowing and subsequent coercive taxation of his people. The American consul at the time, Elbert E. Farman, complimented the Khedive Ismail on his forward-thinking initiatives to improve Egypt's infrastructure, Blunt mss/Farman, Elbert E., West Sussex County Archives. Farman and Wilfrid Blunt corresponded about their differing views of the khedive as a person, but on the other political aspects of the British invasion and occupation, they shared common opinions. Farman's exposure to the khedive, he admitted, was in a diplomatic capacity rather than as a supporter of Egyptian independence at the time.



involved with Egyptian leaders as they sorted out their own activities and alliances. Anne believed that Arabi's concern regarding Khedive Tewfik was justified, based on the former's experience of the previous autumn, during wedding festivities for the Khedive's sister. At that time, Tewfik had invited Arabi and other military officers to a banquet, an occasion he planned to use to have them all killed. One of Arabi's colleagues, Ali Bey Fehmy, had warned Arabi and thwarted the plot. "We saw Ali Bey Fehmy who saved them and liked him particularly."<sup>254</sup> Such intrigue was not common in Egyptian politics, but its occurrence demonstrated the building intensity that the military rebellion caused. Each interest group sought to maintain its power base and the status quo; the khedive seemed to believe that such an end justified the means to achieve it.<sup>255</sup> Anne believed that truth and justice overruled self-interest on the part of people or states.

One of the first requirements the Egyptian nationalists set for themselves was to draft a programme outlining the National Party's constitution and administrative structure. Lady Anne and Wilfrid assisted the nationalists with writing the programme; it had to be written in Arabic, English, and French, with drafts provided to all of the major parties concerned for revisions and editing. One of the first editors was Louis Sabine, a Lebanese writer and Anne's Arabic teacher. Sabine objected to the initial language of Egyptian independence, in reference to the role of religion and the sultan in Constantinople. He argued that most of the members of the National Party still regarded the Turkish sultan as the "head of religion," who had the right to nominate a local religious leader, known as Sheikh al Islam.<sup>256</sup> Traditionally, the sultan's nomination met

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<sup>254</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 14 December 1881.

<sup>255</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 14 December 1881.

<sup>256</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881. See also, John O. Voll, *Islam, Continuity and Change*, 93. The legitimacy of the sultan derived from his position as caliph, or Islamic leader. After the Tanzimat reforms in Turkey, the complex relationship of Egypt to the Sultan at Constantinople included the

with the approval of local leaders, who were usually comprised of the Turkish elite. Sabine foresaw a potentially inflammatory conflict if the nationalists immediately demanded that the sultan's Sheikh al Islam be replaced by their own Egyptian nominee.

This is in fact the difficult point. Arabi dare not say out what, I am convinced, he thinks. It is true they say they do, but they do not act accordingly, when they reject the Sheykh al Islam chosen by the khedive and approved by the Turkish faction in order to substitute one whom the khedive was obliged unwillingly to confirm in his office. However, when it is written, the paper must be shewn and we can then get distinct answers to all doubtful points.<sup>257</sup>

In this passage, Anne illustrated one of the salient points of difference between the Egyptians and their Turkish rulers that demanded a concrete proposal: how to reconcile the accepted role of the Sultan as Caliph, and his representative in Cairo, the Sheikh al Islam, with Egyptian nationalism and bid for independence. This one point provides a glimpse into the layered complexity of Egyptian religious politics, which historically maintained an important position within the broader secular political system. Anne's response to this potentially volatile point shows that she believed that the document could and should express the will of the Egyptians, with great care in the expression of religious structures, so that the nationalists could avoid direct conflict with Turkey.

Edward Malet, who was Lady Anne and Wilfrid's personal friend as well as Consul-General, had recruited the Blunts to provide him with a conduit for communication with Egyptian leaders. Early in December, during the discussion about the sultan and the Sheikh al Islam, Malet sent a message through Wilfrid to the Cairo ulama. The position of Sheikh al Islam was a powerful one, and represented an opportunity for native Egyptians to occupy a position that had been dominated by the

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local Sheikh al Islam, whose position in the Turkish elite caused Egyptian nationalists to want him replaced with a native Egyptian.

<sup>257</sup>LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881.

Turco-Circassian elites at the pleasure of the khedive. The Cairo ulama believed that British support lay behind the Khedive's current choice, and that the ulama's intention to depose the Sheikh al Islam would upset the British and cause them to annex Egypt or abandon the Egyptians to their fate with the Turks. Malet wished to convey to the ulama that "the British government have not the slightest intention of either taking the country or handing it over or abandoning it to the Turks."<sup>258</sup> Anne recorded this message when Malet asked Wilfrid to deliver it, and she looked back on it later when Wilfrid's participation in political events sparked accusations of interference.

Talabi Bey, colonel in the army and commander of the Kasr el Nil post, met with Lady Anne and Wilfrid to discuss the secular platforms of the Nationalist Party and the Egyptians' views of the British military administration in Cairo. Talabi admitted that most Egyptians did not trust the British Consul-General, Edward Malet, or the British financial adviser, Auckland Colvin,<sup>259</sup> an admission that Anne noted with chagrin in her journal.<sup>260</sup> While Anne wanted justice for the Egyptians, and had no desire to see England declare Egypt as a territory, she wanted Egyptians to understand the reality of Malet's difficult position. She wrote:

[Egyptians] do not seem able to understand how completely in the dark an ambassador must be...and they seemed to suppose that because they did have

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<sup>258</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 5 December 1881, f. 30.

<sup>259</sup> B. R. Tomlinson, 'Colvin, Sir Auckland (1838–1908)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, VOL. 12, P. 831. Auckland Colvin represented the Bank of England in Egypt and served in the appointed position of commissioner of the debt for the Dual Control, then later controller-general. He was responsible for managing the Egyptian government's debts to its foreign creditors. Debt payments, as structured by the Dual Control accounted for nearly two-thirds of Egypt's revenues each year. Later in his career, Colvin served as chairman of the Egyptian Delta Railway and the Khedival Mail Steamship Company, both of which indicate the level of financial interest held by British officials in Egypt. Colvin also had a long career in India in several capacities, such as the government of the Northwest Province. He and Wilfrid Blunt maintained an ongoing political enmity for each other, which sometimes appeared in print.

<sup>260</sup> LAB journals add mss 53913, 27 December 1881, 47.

some direct communication with him it must be his own fault if he was not aware that they were perfectly honest straightforward people not representing any selfish interest but that of the six millions of Egyptians who they say are all of one mind and one heart.<sup>261</sup>

Lady Anne recounted Wilfrid's illustration to Talabi Bey that if Malet listened to the National Party and its grievances and plans, he was also required to listen to the perspective of the Circassian community:

...From whom he would learn that they considered the National Party nothing but a few discontented officers of the army clamoring for more pay and more power so as to tyrannise over the country and to upset any good that had been done of late years by the 'control.'<sup>262</sup>

Lady Anne also lamented that Egyptian nationalist leaders did not clearly understand that foreign envoys, such as Malet, suffered from conflicts of information between members of their own government's representatives. Such contradictions made it difficult, if not impossible, for envoys to participate actively in local political conflicts, especially if those conflicts appeared hostile to a ruler with whom their home government had an alliance, such as England's agreement with Turkey.<sup>263</sup>

In spite of the intensity and complexity of Egyptian politics at that time—with the Egyptian nationalists, the Turkish ruling elite, and the British administrators—Malet took an active and positive interest in the inaugural session of the Egyptian parliament,

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<sup>261</sup> LAB journals add mss 53913, 27 December 1881, 48. Anne's pragmatic thought process is implicit within the mild sarcasm of her note here, knowing that not every single Egyptian thought with one mind and one heart.

<sup>262</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881. This view of the Egyptian revolution has persisted in some of the historiography of the period, which demonstrates the complexity of the voices involved in telling the story. Anne understood the local interests at stake in this revolution, and knew that the Turco-Circassian elite would try to downgrade the Egyptian-based character of the revolution.

<sup>263</sup> In this comment, Anne indirectly predicts the coming conflict within the British policy-makers because the status quo became the focus of British response to the Egyptian Question. It also demonstrates the policy conflicts that emerged between officials based in Cairo and those based in London. Anne understood that the political sympathies and policies within her own nation were not monolithic. Egyptian nationalists held a variety of beliefs and policies, and so did British officials.

scheduled to take place in the next days or weeks, in late January or early February, 1882. Lady Anne referred to this meeting as the first real parliament for Egypt, given that the parliament convened under the previous leadership of Ismail Pasha was “a mere farce and no one dared speak his mind.” Further, she wrote that, “The English nation too would be very much interested and sympathetic with the Egyptians in this matter.”<sup>264</sup> Anne expressed her belief that the legacy of English commitment to liberty and justice would extend to subjects of its empire, formal or informal. She did not view skin color, religion, or nationality, viewed by some British administrators as evidence of “subject races,” as any form of deterrent for liberty and justice.<sup>265</sup>

The Egyptian parliament would consist of eighty members, most of whom had already been elected in their districts. Talabi Bey believed that most members were the best possible people from the towns, and were either sheikhs or members of the Ulema<sup>266</sup>. When Lady Anne asked him if he meant the traditionally religious ulema, such as the al Azhar (University) ulema, Talabi said no, these were men of “ulema es Siasia, learned men in politics—that is the men best informed and most intelligent of the various country towns.”<sup>267</sup> This political ulema, a variation of the traditional Islamic ulema, was an

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<sup>264</sup> LAB journals add mss 53913, 15 December 1881, 49. Anne’s comment here also indicates Malet’s early sympathy with the nationalists.

<sup>265</sup> Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (New York: Macmillan, 1908), i., 280. Cromer used this term, which he also used in the title of another book, *Government of Subject Races*. Cromer and Lady Anne viewed people in completely different ways.

<sup>266</sup> The term Ulema, can be spelled in a variety of ways: ulama, Ulama, and Anne spelled it differently at times in her journals.

<sup>267</sup> LAB journals, add 53913, 15 December 1881. Talabi Bey outlined this plan in detail to Anne. See also John Obert Voll, *Islam, Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 10-11, The concept of an ulema is an ancient tradition in Islam, dating to the period of the classic caliphate. The ulama provided the Muslim understanding of Islamic law (Shari’a), rather than the state developing such a concept. In addition, see especially Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 38. In Egypt, as in most of the Muslim world, the ulama historically “played an important role as intermediaries between the state and the people,” led traditionally by a religious scholar, but in Egypt at this time, there was an almost secular political element to the proposed ulema elected to parliament.

indication of the intention of the revolutionaries to create a government along secular political lines, but Islamically legitimate. The number of possible representatives could increase to 120, but eighty was a comfortable number with which to begin. Cairo had four members, owing to its size and status as the capital. Al Azhar was welcome to nominate candidates as deputies who would be encouraged to participate in the parliamentary meetings, but they generally would not mix themselves in the work of politics. “The country is expecting great things of the parliament and all are convinced that its members will speak out boldly on the subject of abuses to be redressed and reforms to be made.”<sup>268</sup> Anne was optimistic that Egypt, left to its own will, was on the brink of independence, and would pursue that independence with thoughtful plans and actions.

Evidence of the tension in Cairo at the time of the drafting of the programme is palpable in the correspondence that Edward Malet asked Lady Anne and Wilfrid to convey. Anne detailed the progression of events in Cairo as Malet sought and used the expertise and contacts of Anne and Wilfrid to clarify the positions of the British and Egyptians to each other.<sup>269</sup> Three days after the message to the Cairo ulema, Malet asked Wilfrid to let the Nationalists know that “if there were another military demonstration [in Egypt] Germany would certainly step in and say, ‘if you won’t occupy Egypt we will,’ thus forcing England to an occupation which the government is most anxious to avoid.” Anne wrote, “Wilfrid has permission to repeat this.”<sup>270</sup> In the same message, and another reference to the complex political scene of the day, Wilfrid was asked by Malet to convey the British view on the new native law courts that the nationalists were planning. Malet

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<sup>268</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881.

<sup>269</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 27 December 1881, f. 72.

<sup>270</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 8 December 1881, f. 38.

requested that “at first and for some time be mixed judges (viz some Europeans) in the Courts of Appeal. Otherwise the affair would, he said, ‘be a farce.’ No Egyptian judge would yet have the courage of his own opinion in opposition to pressure from persons whose power to benefit or injure he was afraid of.”<sup>271</sup>

At the same time Lady Anne and Wilfrid were organizing, writing, and delivering Malet’s messages to various Egyptians and the latter’s replies back to Malet, they were also conducting the same type of correspondence between Malet and the drafters of the programme. Later in December, Wilfrid and Arabi met, with Arabi making final “corrections and adjustments to the programme, in his own handwriting, but these all in a liberal sense, far more so than Wilfrid expected.” With this paper, “Wilfrid went to Sir E. Malet and Sir A. Colvin [British representative to the Dual Control] and ‘came back in the afternoon having accomplished all that could be wished...” The programme then went to Muhammad Abduh, who “made two small corrections with his own hand and approved of it. And thus ended a happy day—of hope and a beginning of actual work.”<sup>272</sup> Once again, Anne expressed guarded optimism about the potential for Egyptian independence. She also expressed her own desire to fill her time with meaningful work.

Another part of the service that Lady Anne and Wilfrid provided to both the Egyptians and the British at this time was to submit articles to *The Times* in London, explaining events and outlining the Egyptians’ intentions, so that the information came

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<sup>271</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 8 December 1881, f. 38.

<sup>272</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 19 December 1881, f. 62. Anne indicates in this comment her commitment to having a useful purpose, as well as her optimism for Egyptian independence. This reference also highlights the active part played by Muhammad Abduh who, at this time, was an active reformer within an Islamic context. See also John O. Voll, *Islam*, 95. Abduh’s Islamic thought combined the acceptance of faith in Islam with the legitimacy of reason. See also Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 130. Abduh’s childhood experience of having his family forced to move to avoid excessive taxation under Muhammad Ali’s administration, in order to fund military and infrastructural improvements, made a lifelong impression of Egypt’s need to be an independent state.

from informed, but unofficial, sources. All of these submissions of news and opinions met with Malet's approval as well. Lady Anne and Laura Malet, mother of Edward Malet, were close friends, and stayed in contact on political events and policies.

One of the issues at hand was the part of the programme that outlined the new parliament. Just as the Egyptians organized the parliament and scheduled its first meeting, Malet informed Wilfrid that he objected to the use of the word, parliament, since such a body was not promised to the Egyptians. The Egyptians had told Wilfrid unequivocally that the khedive did promise them a parliament, and a parliament was critical to their plans for independence. Malet warned Wilfrid that the sultan in Constantinople would likely be angry. Wilfrid told Malet, "They [the Egyptians] are all certain that a parliament was promised to them...it is not my idea it is their idea." Malet said that his understanding was that, "No promises were made except that this mejliss [which meets today] should be assembled and that then 'nothing further could be done except with the permission of the Porte.'" [Emphasis Anne's] To Malet's statement, Anne wrote, "This is very far from what the leaders of the National Party have understood. They are convinced they have won the right to have a Parliament." The new parliament, scheduled for that day, was originally selected with the old system. As soon as the parliamentarians met, their agenda included "what alterations shall be made in its own constitution and manner of election, and it will also debate on the extent of its own powers."<sup>273</sup> Egyptians had little experience with parliamentary procedure or constitutional writing; their first parliament existed a few years before, but was largely

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<sup>273</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 26 December 1881. The importance of Malet's suggesting that the mejliss was approved, but not the parliament, is that a mejliss was a traditional gathering in which a khedive or a sultan would listen to local grievances or ideas, but would have a vastly different legislative purpose than that of a parliament. This quote of Malet's also reflects the backchannel influence of Auckland Colvin, who was using Malet as his mouthpiece as the revolution progressed. At this time, Anne and Wilfrid did not realize the extent of Colvin's influence.



used as a source of approval for the Khedive's policies. Egyptian nationalists made every effort to proceed with caution as they navigated the delicate process of creating a parliament that would provide independence without challenging the sultan's ultimate authority.

Anne recorded the next sequence of events: Wilfrid went to Abduh to ask him again his perception of the promises made by the khedive to the nationalists. The promises, as known to the National Party, were not the same as those that emerged from the office of Auckland Colvin, whose position of importance seemed to be misunderstood by the nationalists. The nationalists based their claims on what was printed in French in an official journal, the *Moniteur*, and in Arabic in the *Waqaya*. The promise consisted of a letter from Sherif Pasha, candidate of the National Party and leader of the Egyptian government after Riaz Pasha was removed. Sherif Pasha's letter proposed the ideals of the National Party and, reportedly, received the khedive's approval. "The question now (to us) is what the letter from Sherif specifically contained. Abduh and his friends say it gave a distinct promise of parliamentary government. We are to see the printed document about which there must be something vague or Sir E. Malet and Sir A. Colvin would not so completely differ as to the promises made."<sup>274</sup> Anne recorded Wilfrid's response, which was to change the terminology in the published programme to, "Mejlis en Nawab," in place of parliamentary government. The change in terminology reflected a more Arabic concept in that the traditional mejlis in Islamic society was a weekly meeting place, or assembly, for a political leader to have open discussions, hear grievances, settle disputes, and make announcements. In a modern context, a mejlis could be adapted to a parliament, or it could remain a more traditional mejlis. The change in terminology

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<sup>274</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 26 December 1881.

signified the nationalists' effort to avoid direct confrontation with the Porte. Wilfrid took the revised draft to Malet for his approval.<sup>275</sup> After all of these careful revisions of the English and Arabic drafts of the nationalists' programme, Wilfrid submitted the final draft to the key leaders, Malet, Muhammad Abduh, Arabi, and Sir William Gregory, a politically astute friend living in Egypt at the time. All parties made final suggestions or corrections before Wilfrid sent the English version of the article to *The Times*, as all agreed would happen.

After the programme appeared in *The Times*, Malet shocked Wilfrid by revealing to him a message that the former had just sent to Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville<sup>276</sup> in London, speaking of

... 'Mr. Blunt's interference' in a most disagreeable tone. Wilfrid was extremely surprised and disappointed at this sudden change on Sir E. Malet's part. After asking him to be the bearer of a message on December fifth, and again on December eighth, to the sheikhs and the National Party and again on December nineteenth, accepting his message (when Araby and the other National leaders sent Wilfrid) to Mr. Colvin and to Sir E Malet professing himself much obliged for the service rendered in preventing misunderstanding from continuing—it is certainly strange that he should turn against Wilfrid in this manner.<sup>277</sup>

Lady Anne, shocked by Malet's apparent duplicity, wrote that even though he was a diplomatist, with the attendant desire of removing himself from controversy or scandal, she could not understand his blatant disloyalty toward his longtime friend.

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<sup>275</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 26 December 1881.

<sup>276</sup> Muriel E. Chamberlain, "Gower, Granville George Leveson, second Earl Granville (1815–1891)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 23, p. 109.

<sup>277</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 27 December 1881, f. 73. Lady Anne's indignation and surprise at Malet's apparent duplicity reflects an element of naivete on her part at this time. This experience was one of the defining moments of her own maturity in politics—the ability of career politicians or civil servants to alter facts to further their own ends, or satisfy powerful colleagues.

Anne wrote that Malet's action had the obvious purpose of deflecting any future criticism from himself to Wilfrid in the event of a political disturbance arising from the nationalist revolution.

Wilfrid had promised to make the opinions of the National Party publicly known in England and Sir E Malet knows as well as we do that this can only be done by means of *The Times*. It is well to send the paper to Mr. Gladstone, but the ministry wait to accommodate their action to public opinion so that public opinion must be got at the same time.<sup>278</sup>

Lady Anne acknowledged that possibly Wilfrid had made an error in timing by sending his letter on the morning of the post day, rather than sending it the evening before but the process of vetting the documents with so many parties made it virtually impossible for Wilfrid to have handled the situation differently.<sup>279</sup>

After meeting with Wilfrid, Malet had consulted again with Colvin, who viewed any khedival promise of a parliament as wishful thinking on the part of the nationalists. Rather than expressing support for the Egyptians' efforts at independence, Colvin had encouraged Malet to adopt an ambivalent view.<sup>280</sup> In retrospect, Lady Anne believed that this encounter with Colvin changed Malet from an active supporter of Egyptian efforts to a moderate observer of the political events as they unfolded. Malet's change of heart politically did not, however, explain what Lady Anne considered his betrayal of his longtime friend, Wilfrid.<sup>281</sup>

One of the significant aspects of the Blunt-Malet-Colvin episode is the glimpse it provides into the complex process of formulating and activating British policy in Egypt.

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<sup>278</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 26 December 1881. Lady Anne's observation about the importance of the press demonstrates how British policy-making was changing during this time. Men on the spot and men in London both used the local presses as the mouthpiece for their own purposes.

<sup>279</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 26 December 1881.

<sup>280</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 27 December 1881, 71.

<sup>281</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 26 December 1881.

With the telegraph providing comparatively instant information between Cairo and London, the speed with which policy could change increased exponentially. Foreign Secretary Granville maintained his office in London, while Consul-General Malet and Auckland Colvin of the Dual Control, lived in Cairo. As Lady Anne and Wilfrid became more involved as conduits among the parties involved in the Egyptian uprising, the positions of power in London and Cairo began to change. Their initial agreement with Malet seemed to be almost as firm as an agreement with the prime minister himself. Within days, as the viability of the Egyptian Nationalist Party began to coalesce, British power bases shifted, with Granville putting pressure on Malet from London and Colvin recommending neutrality in Cairo. The Blunts witnessed this change, which was the catalyst that ultimately sent them back to London in early March to try to influence policy in London. They had originally thought that the publication of the programme of the Nationalist Party would provide support for the Egyptians in London, but the shift in power and policy forced them to reevaluate that idea and change their plans.<sup>282</sup>

Publication of the Nationalist Party's programme in *The Times* had occupied much of Lady Anne's time and thought, with an important question being whether or not a cover letter from Wilfrid should appear in the same article. Anne believed that Wilfrid was right in initially asking *The Times* editor, Thomas Chenery, to omit the majority of his letter and his name, partly to give due credit to the nationalist authors, and partly to deflect attention from Wilfrid's involvement. Ultimately, Wilfrid decided to have Chenery leave out his name altogether, a move with which Anne also agreed, as the best

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<sup>282</sup> The study of this shift in power and policy, detailed by Anne in her journals and by Wilfrid in his published writings, arguably provided the basis for some of the views in the pivotal historiography of this period, *Africa and the Victorians*. This book, by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, suggested that the men on the spot created policy on the ground in Egypt, rather than a formal policy emanating from London.

alternative, given the recent “betrayal” in Malet’s correspondence about Wilfrid’s supposed interference.<sup>283</sup> When the text of the programme finally appeared, *The Times* credited its authorship to Ahmed Arabi alone, instead of the Parliamentary committee and other leaders who helped draft it.<sup>284</sup> Malet expressed concern about the mistake, while Wilfrid attempted to discover the cause of it through the Reuters news office.

Parallel events occurred at this time, with little apparent connection, but with jointly counterproductive impact for the efforts of the Nationalist Party. Coincidentally, while the discrepancy about the programme’s publication in *The Times* was in question, the fledgling Egyptian government had decided to promote Arabi to the position of a pasha and an undersecretary “of some sort.” Elevating Arabi to such a prominent position at a time when tension was high was a move that alarmed Malet. Malet expressed his concern on the basis of its possibly causing dissent in the inexperienced Egyptian administration, especially with the misinformation about the authorship of the programme having just occurred. The Nationalists responded that they were comfortable with their choice of Arabi’s position and did not express concern about the mistake in *The Times*. Anne, like Malet, believed that the political intensity of the time justified caution and correcting the mistake in authorship. She thought it was important to inform the public that the programme was a joint effort toward a real constitution, and not a simple document written by Arabi alone; the parliament’s low-key position prevailed.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 30 December 1881 and 1 January 1882, 83.

These two entries appear on the same page, as almost the same thought, even though they took place two days apart.

<sup>284</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 4 January 1882. Anne wrote in her journal on this day that she received a telegram “saying that Araby had written a letter to *The Times* containing the programme of the National Party. This programme is of course the one sent by Wilfrid. The telegram is a blunder for of course the Times will not have said anything about it to give rise to a notion that it was in a letter from Araby.” [emphasis Anne’s]

<sup>285</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 4 January 1882. Arabi was made Secretary of War.

Anne respected Arabi's conscientious approach to Egyptian liberty and government, but she realized that sometimes his comments reflected an element of naïveté in his view of world politics. When Anne compared Arabi to his colleague, Talabi Bey, she noted that

On the whole, I think one can talk more at ease with Talaby than with Araby who, probably from the conspicuous position he now holds, has not the spontaneous manner of Talaby—who with neither the commanding presence of Seyyid Ahmed Araby, nor the obligation of always recollecting his position—this feeling I think in Araby's case—is mixed up with perhaps a certain inclination to pose.<sup>286</sup>

Anne understood that Arabi's new position caused him to try to emulate the qualities of a leader, his efforts at which gave him a certain awkwardness. She and Wilfrid believed in Araby and his program, supported the Nationalists, and worked to make the case of the nationalists known to the English community in Egypt and in England, in spite of what Anne viewed as minor personal flaws.

Anne, in her characteristic even-handedness, believed that Araby's view of regional Muslim power was foolish. In the context of discussing England's interest in Egypt, which was purely for the benefit of England, Araby commented to Anne that Egyptians had no fear that England would "Act an unfriendly part toward their country, in spite of what newspapers might write of annexation, believing that the English people in England and the English government...had a real sympathy for them..." Anne acknowledged that Arabi's naïveté expressed itself when he continued by suggesting that should "England desire to take the country she [Egypt] could raise the whole world against her."<sup>287</sup> Arabi compared the population of Europe to the Muslim population in Asia, by suggesting that, "The European countries comprised a population of 250

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<sup>286</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881.

<sup>287</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881.

millions. The Asiatic Mussulman numbered 1000 millions—and would rise as one man.” Anne responded, “Of course this is an absurd argument and perhaps partly from ignorance and partly from swagger. Still I think it pardonable under the circumstances and at any rate not worth disputing about—the occasion for testing its truth will not arise.” Anne viewed Arabi’s naïve bluster as a mistake that would “irritate the representatives of the European Powers.”<sup>288</sup>

Lady Anne had a grasp of international politics and the combined influence of the European Powers in response to Ottoman or Egyptian power shifts. She realized the gravity of international provocation. Anne wrote:

What I regret still more is that he [Arabi] seems unable to realize the very real danger of an occupation—however temporary. He and his party profess and I believe sincerely in earnest that they will do nothing rash or likely to cause anxiety to European governments, and I trust that we may be of use in helping to make this known in England.

Convincing the British public and its government of the good intentions of the Nationalist Party was one part of Lady Anne and Wilfrid’s support of Egyptian independence, but the broader spectrum of European competition for territory created an enormous risk for Egypt and for the international balance of power.

In assessing Arabi’s position in relation to other European Powers, Lady Anne saw a genuine threat from German interests in Egypt. German Chancellor Otto Bismarck, responsible for Germany’s unification a decade earlier, had made Germany into a formidable European power. He challenged England to maintain peace and the status quo in Egypt or outside intervention might be required. Anne knew that the National Party had to make its position clear to avoid forcing an inter-European scramble for Egypt. She wrote,

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<sup>288</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881.

...the National Party ought to be made aware that supposing Germany says ‘if you will not occupy Egypt I will,’ it would be impossible to avoid an occupation [by England] for a time, and that this is a thing which it depends on Araby and his party to prevent. He replied on being told of this danger, ‘if England is so weak, or Germany so strong as to force England to act, that is not our affair.’ How he thinks that the 1000 millions of Mussulmans are to reach Egypt I don’t know, the real Mussulman census being under 200 million besides.”<sup>289</sup>

Anne, always honest and pragmatic, did not blame Araby for indulging in this bit of “swagger,” because in all other ways he pursued moderation in his policies. His swagger was spoken in the event of a last resort to secure independence, and was an event that he did not believe would occur.

Anne investigated the broad spectrum of effects of British control in Egypt. She discussed the effects of the Dual Control’s foreclosure on khedivial lands. She asked Talaby Bey and Arabi to give her a synopsis of the current status of the lands in question. Talaby and Araby both expressed their dislike of the English officials in Egypt, particularly the domain commissioners. Domain commissioners represented one of the effects of the European control of finances in the area of agricultural production. Lands recovered from the khedive’s bankruptcy, administered by a consortium of foreign officials, often lay fallow, in spite of local officials’ efforts to lease or purchase them. The European domain commissioners earned opprobrium from Egyptians for their opaque transactions, weak excuses for keeping lands idle, and mysterious sales of some properties to foreign interests. Anne viewed the commissioners’ activities as evidence of their selfish interest in job security; if the lands sold, the administration would no longer require their services. “It is monstrous that people should be in a position to do these things—and it seems they will not even let the lands...”<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881.

<sup>290</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 15 December 1881. Here Anne recognized the disconnected policy of the British seizure of the Khedive’s lands, the efforts to balance the budget, and the lack of expediency in



The close relationship shared by the Blunts and Malet, in spite of the latter's disloyalty, encouraged Lady Anne and Wilfrid to continue to seek the Malet's counsel about political events as they unfolded. Malet reported to Anne and Wilfrid that the khedive had seemed more at ease lately than he had in the previous months. Anne and Wilfrid supposed that after the khedive had made his speech at the opening of the parliament a few days before, he was more relaxed. Malet told the Blunts that he had said to the Khedive that "he has a great part to play now." "I said it seemed to me that if he will act honestly by the National Party there can be no reason that they should not work together."<sup>291</sup> This statement foretold what would be the basis of the Blunts' objection to England's eventual rapprochement with Turkish leadership against the National Party and its efforts to achieve Egyptian independence.

The meeting of the Egyptian parliament did not rest well with the Sultan in Constantinople, who had sent a message to the Khedive Tewfik admonishing him that if he allowed the parliament to convene, then whatever consequences arose from it would be his own to bear. The exact function of the parliament was a work in progress, with the government making recommendations as to its obligations and limitations. The Egyptian government sought the advice of Auckland Colvin, whose counsel resulted in the proposal that the parliament should have a veto on regulations of laws proposed by the government, but would not be responsible for the actual drafting of law until sometime in the future. The parliament did not wish to make laws at this point in time, citing its collective inexperience in the process, so the proposal seemed reasonable. In the case of a

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returning the lands to production. If the lands were producing, Egypt would be able to reduce its debt in a more timely manner. Productive land also gave the fellahin the opportunity to work and support their families, not to mention revenue to the government.

<sup>291</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53913, 31 December 1881, 86.

vote of no confidence in the ministry, and if the khedive wished to keep that ministry, he would be obligated to dissolve the parliament and a new parliament elected. If the new parliament also returned a no confidence vote, the ministry would be required to change. Lady Anne seemed comfortable with the compromise this system offered. It provided some measure of self-determination for the Egyptians, since their representatives composed the parliament. This system did not necessarily sever Egypt from Turkey, which ostensibly maintained stability.<sup>292</sup> It was a cumbersome compromise, but a step in the direction of independence.

Lady Anne was in the middle of experiencing the concurrent pivotal events of suffering betrayal by a friend and apparently deliberate misinformation by a major news service. This hard education defined Lady Anne's future political involvement, in which she adopted a pragmatic position based on her own knowledge, cosmopolitan worldview, and the results of others' efforts rather than their words or excuses. She knew too well that friendships and political alliances were separate relationships and could be mutually disappointing.

While the internal political events in Cairo were changing rapidly, the responses of the British government in London were reacting quickly as well. Prime Minister Gladstone expressed concern for Britain's responsibility to maintain its position of supporting British financial interests in Egypt, through its association with the Ottoman government in Turkey. In the same letter, Gladstone expressed his surprise at the growth of the Egyptian revolution and Nationalist Party:

I am not by any means pained, but I am much surprised at this rapid development of a national sentiment and party in Egypt. The very ideas of such a sentiment and the Egyptian people seemed quite incompatible. How it has come up I do not

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<sup>292</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 2 January 1882.

know: most of all is the case strange if the standing army be the nest that has reared it. There however it seems to be, and to claim the respect due to it as a fact, and due also to the capabilities that may be latent in it for the future. 'Egypt for the Egyptians' is the sentiment to which I should wish to give scope: and could it prevail it would I think be the best, the only good solution of the 'Egyptian Question.'<sup>293</sup>

Gladstone's support of the Egyptians is clear, and it was this support that Lady Anne and Wilfrid believed would form the basis of British policy in Egypt. They maintained contact with Gladstone and his personal secretary, Eddy Hamilton, throughout the Gladstone administration. Later, it became clear that the correspondence and the actions were not aligned.

#### **JOINT NOTE**

Politics was the prevailing topic of conversation for Lady Anne, and the gauge by which she judged an interesting conversation. She and Wilfrid often dined with the Malets, and sometimes the dinners included other guests living in or visiting Cairo. Conversation almost always ventured into politics, and in the Malet house, the political information was usually current. In early January, 1882, Lady Anne and Wilfrid dined with the Malets at the latter's home, and one of the other guests was Charles Cookson, British Consul at Alexandria. Cookson told Lady Anne of a new agreement between England and France, both stating that they agreed to support the Khedive Ismail against all rivals. This pivotal agreement became known as the Joint Note, and provoked intense reaction, even condemnation, from all parts of the complex Egyptian political scene. The note's broad commitment promised the khedive that England and France would support

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<sup>293</sup>Agatha Ramm, ed. *The Political Correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville, 1876-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 327. In this same correspondence, Gladstone mentions a letter from Lady Anne Blunt on Egypt, but Ramm notes that it was "not traced." Ramm's book was published two years before Lady Anne Blunt's journals were available in the British Library.

his administration against any aggression, internal or external. Anne reacted to the news of this shocking document by writing,

A great mistake I thought and most unfortunate at this moment and I said so and to this Mr. Cookson agreed though he did not seem to take it quite as seriously as I did. What can the National Party think of all the assurances Sir E. Malet has given them of the sympathy which would be felt in England for the parliament when his government strikes this blow, as it will seem to them, aimed specially at all their dearest and most reasonable hopes?<sup>294</sup>

What Anne did not realize at the time was that Malet, also taken by surprise by the Note, and deeply disturbed by it, had contemplated his own resignation.<sup>295</sup> The adoption of the Joint Note highlights the “political arm-wrestling” between London and Cairo, London and Paris, and the many interests and fears shared among all of them.

This blatant contradiction of the National Party programme in the form of the Joint Note actually preceded the publication of the programme, and this discrepancy in timing indicated to Anne that the contradiction and publication was the work of “Sherif Pasha, or rather Borelli, in whose hands Sherif is said to be (by Abduh).”<sup>296</sup> Abduh insisted to Anne that Sherif Pasha and Mahmud Barody were honest and true, to which Anne responded, “We shall see. Borelli sent the message to the *Wagaya* office on Wednesday.”<sup>297</sup> The gravity of the Joint Note was its collusion with France against the

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<sup>294</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 8 January 1882.

<sup>295</sup> M.E. Chamberlain, “Sir Charles Dilke and the British intervention in Egypt, 1882: Decision Making in a Nineteenth-Century Cabinet.” *British Journal of International Studies*, v 2, 3 (October 1976), pp. 231-245.

<sup>296</sup> Byron D. Cannon, “A Reassessment of Judicial Reform in Egypt, 1876-1891,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1972), pp. 51-74, 58. Besides the complex discussion regarding the initiation of an Egyptian parliament, Borelli was one of the foreign legal advisers attempting to design, or reform, the mixed court system and the capitulatory legal tradition that clogged Egyptian legal affairs, both civil and criminal. The potential judicial and legislative reforms were hindered by the complicated interests of Egyptians, Turks, and Europeans. Anne understood the complications but maintained her focus on justice for native Egyptians. The name, Borelli, in Anne’s notes, refers to Octave Borelli, French legal adviser to the finance ministry.

<sup>297</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 9 January 1882.

interests of Egyptian nationalists. Wilfrid had gone to Malet's office the morning after he learned of the note, and read the text of it. It was "evidently of French origin the language being an English translation."<sup>298</sup> Lady Anne's response to the official explanation of the Joint Note:

England only agreed to the joint note to take the opportunity of Gambetta's accession to office to cement the union of action with France. This makes it worse. To proclaim sympathy with French action just when the seal has been set to all the worst French proceedings by the return of Roustam to Tunis, will have a most unfortunate effect.<sup>299</sup>

Following the announcement of the note, Anne found some comfort in Wilfrid's securing a meeting with Arabi. Arabi wrote a letter to the Sultan, with a large number of signatures, expressing his concern that Britain would respond to France's invasion of Tunisia by taking over the Nile Valley to maintain political balance.<sup>300</sup>

When Wilfrid arrived to meet with Arabi, he found the military in turmoil, with the soldiers in a state of excitement about the alliance of England and France against Egypt, as they perceived it. When Wilfrid arrived, Arabi had seen the text of the note,

and though kind and friendly in manner and tone to Wilfrid was in a great rage with England and its government and ministers.<sup>301</sup>

Anne's concern about Arabi's naiveté in regard to European Powers appeared to be validated in the latter's surprise and anger.

Anne's assessment of the Egyptians' reaction was,

They all think, though wrongly, that Sir Edward Malet has not been just to them. But though this is a mistake (for Wilfrid has now seen all the despatches and

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<sup>298</sup> LAB journals, add mss 52914, 9 January 1882.

<sup>299</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 14 January 1882. Anne refers to Rustem Pasha, whom France restored to his office against Tunisian will, sparking protests. Gambetta was newly elected prime minister of France. Alexander Scholch also comments on the intense reaction of Urabi to the French conquest of Tunisia.

<sup>300</sup> Alexander Scholch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!*, 159.

<sup>301</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 14 January 1882.

telegrams he has written and sent for the last three months, and says he has been throughout perfectly straight and fair) it is difficult to prove it as his government has not followed his advice and has sent this note in spite of his protest against it.<sup>302</sup>

Anne's loyalty to Malet exceeded his to her and to Wilfrid, but Anne was ever the pragmatist, but Anne's pragmatism was offset by her grasp of the international influences involved in England's policy decisions. She was annoyed, if not angry, by the apparent influence of France in England's policy. She wrote,

The fact is the note was drawn up by Gambetta himself (and no doubt Dilke consenting) and the ministry in England busily acts at his bidding in order to gain something with reference to the commercial treaty now being argued about.<sup>303</sup>

Anne did not share the obsession of some in the Cabinet, who believed that France had to be a complete partner in England's policy decision, ostensibly to maintain a status quo within the European Powers.

In the middle of the intense political emotions of the time, Malet again asked Wilfrid to serve as an unofficial emissary to Arabi and his officers, which the latter agreed to do, in spite of his recent negative experience with Malet. Malet's message to Arabi and the officers was:

...to explain and assure them that the meaning of the note as understood by the British govt. was that the Engl. govt. would not permit any interference of the Sultan with Egypt and would also not allow the khedive to go back from his promises or molest the parliament.<sup>304</sup>

Lady Anne commented:

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<sup>302</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 9 January 1882.

<sup>303</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 9 January 1882.

<sup>304</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 9 January 1882. The term used by Lady Anne, "Roustan game," refers to the French political activities in Tunisia, in which the French government appointed a Resident Minister to administrate Tunisia behind the façade of Tunisia's Bey. Théodore Justin Dominique Roustan served as resident minister from 1881-1882. Anne knew that the French invasion of Tunisia was a catalyst for the Egyptian independence movement.

This is certainly not the meaning the words of the note seem to point to, and the explanation was neither believed nor accepted. Wilfrid returned saying, 'They are irreconcilable.' No wonder. It is a frightful blunder and all the more stupid because it is pretty certain now that France intends to play a Roustan game in Egypt if she can.<sup>305</sup>

Lady Anne understood France's concern in regard to the Egyptian nationalist movement. If Egyptians obtained liberty from British and European control, and even from Turkey, what inspiration might that provide for other North Africans under French control? What if the Sultan at Constantinople was the source of Egyptian unrest, and that the uprising was the signal for a pan-Islamic insurrection in North Africa?<sup>306</sup> French fear fueled British anxiety and a rationale for forward policy advocates in the creation of the Joint Note.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid proposed to Muhammad Abduh that he meet with Auckland Colvin to discuss the Egyptian budget question. The two met for several hours, each explaining the position of the parties involved. After the Abduh and Colvin meeting, Malet proposed a compromise designed to defuse the Joint Note crisis. He initially suggested his idea to Wilfrid, asking Wilfrid to ask Muhammad Abduh to consider the proposal before it was offered to Arabi. The proposal was for the Egyptian Parliament to have its right to control the budget recognized, but postponed for three years. The purpose of the three-year suspension would be to provide the Egyptians with an opportunity to learn management and finance skills before taking over the whole budget.<sup>307</sup> Malet told Wilfrid that the English government was likely to accept such a

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<sup>305</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 9 January 1882. Anne's reference to the Roustan game demonstrates her knowledge of the aftermath of the Cyprus Convention. The German chancellor, Otto Bismarck, worked to maintain a European status quo in the near east and North Africa. Part of the plan included French control in Tunisia, and eventual British control of Egypt. Theodor Roustan was the French Consul in Tunisia who assisted in carrying out French control of Tunisia.

<sup>306</sup> Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians* (New York, St. Martin's, 1967), 96.

<sup>307</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53914, 11 January 1882.

compromise. Wilfrid responded that such a compromise would show that England was actually in favor of the Parliament. Anne wrote, “It seems that there is now a good chance of a very satisfactory communication being almost immediately made by the English government to that effect. This would go far to neutralize the unfortunate effect of the last ‘note.’”<sup>308</sup>

Within days of the Joint Note’s release, the National Party’s response to the Note appeared in the Arabic language newspaper, *Taif*. The article, from Lady Anne’s perspective, was:

A flaming one in good Arabic—against Europe and specially England whose joint note with France has made the party furious—and I fear irreconcilable....Sent Sabine to see Abduh and ask if there is anything Wilfrid can do as believing he is of no more use he wishes to go unless wanted...and he now believes too that they no longer trust him. However Abduh sent word that they do trust him that he can help them and beg him to meet some of the Nawwab tomorrow evening at his house. So we again must stay.<sup>309</sup>

The suspicion of collusion between England and France was a recurring topic of conversation during the intense months of the spring of 1882, with the Joint Note as undeniable evidence.

Lady Anne kept a close watch on newspapers, correspondence, and conversations with people involved on all sides of the conflict. She kept a book of newspaper cuttings to keep the chronology of events in order. In late January, Lady Anne transferred into a large book of cuttings an article “about the commercial treaty and the date suggested a bribe to France.”<sup>310</sup> Wild rumors of collusion resulted from the Joint Note, and prompted

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<sup>308</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53914, 11 January 1882.

<sup>309</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 16 January 1882. Lady Anne and Wilfrid had planned a desert trip into Arabia, but postponed it, due to the Egyptian revolution.

<sup>310</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 28 January 1882. Anne wrote that the cutting came from *The Daily Telegraph*. The commercial treaty referred to a project in which France and England would create a trade agreement between themselves and Egypt, through the offices of the khedive. The corresponding ministers



wild actions among the groups vying for power and influence in Cairo. The National Party had an internal response to these varied reports as well, and dismissed forty Coptic members of Parliament. The Copts were replaced with Muslims. The Coptic community panicked at this action, since the nationalist movement had been remarkably inclusive of Copts and Muslims until the Joint Note debacle.<sup>311</sup>

Lady Anne understood the complexity of the political interests at work in Egypt, and she empathized with the grievances of the native Egyptians. On one occasion, Anne and Wilfrid dined with friends (“and very dull it was”) in Cairo where they met a young Englishman who, stranded in Cairo, instantly found a job in the office of a British administrator. His accidental arrival in Cairo, lack of credentials, and immediate employment, for which Egypt’s treasury had to pay, caused Lady Anne to respond, “No doubt he is one of those Europeans whom the patriots would like to sweep off.”<sup>312</sup> Anne had observed the fact that the swollen British bureaucracy was financed by the Egyptian treasury, due to the foreign control, largely British, of Egypt’s income. The nationalists’ desire to obtain control over a portion of the budget lay in their wish to trim the swollen bureaucracy, a move the British did not necessarily support. This seemingly minor incident, repeated dozens of times throughout the early years of British financial control, is representative of the abuse of Egypt’s treasury that led to the nationalist revolution.

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of trade kept their meetings secret, which added an air of collusion to the project. The bribe to France referred to the rumor that England paid France to allow the former to pursue its goals in Egypt without interference. This story is similar to the account by the America ambassador to Egypt, Elbert E. Farman, who was witness to the payment of American notes, in the amount of \$300,000, by a Rothschild agent [unnamed], with Rivers Wilson in attendance, so that America would have no financial exposure in Egypt and presumably no interest in British activities there. West Sussex County Archive, division of National Archives, UK. Blunt mss, E.E. Farman to Wilfrid Blunt, 18 April 1910. [img 1971]

<sup>311</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 16 January 1882. Anne wrote of this event, “This is the worst news yet.” With England and France representing Christian nations with imperial designs on Egypt, the Copts suddenly represented possible collaborators with the enemy.

<sup>312</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 2 January 1882.

Because the nationalist revolution for Egyptian independence against the Ismail administration and the European powers was gaining intensity by early January of 1882, Lady Anne realized that Wilfrid's and her plans might have to change. She and Wilfrid were unsure of when they would be able to leave Cairo for a trip to Arabia they had planned. The immediate "turmoil and confusion" of trying to work out the complicated interests between the National Party, the khedive, and the European powers created uncertainty. Once the immediate crisis passed, Lady Anne wrote that Wilfrid believed that they should change their plans and go to England, where they could more easily "bring more pressure to bear on the Government than from a distance out here." Anne did not want to go back to the cold weather of England, but she believed that "the risk must be risked if it is right and just and we cannot go back from what we have promised. So let it be done if right."<sup>313</sup>

Before they left for England, Anne and Wilfrid tried desperately to mitigate the influence of the forward forces present in Cairo and London, which were bent on British intervention. Grave news in mid-February caused Anne to write that the latest news from Wilfrid's visit to town was "grave having heard things which make him fear some new embroilment, a determination to intervene which will certainly cause disasters here."<sup>314</sup> Anne wrote that Wilfrid proposed to meet with Sultan Pasha the next day and as many members of the new Parliament and persons of influence as possible,

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<sup>313</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 10 January 1882. Also in Archer and Fleming, *Journals and Correspondence*.

<sup>314</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 15 February 1882. Anne and Wilfrid were camped outside Cairo, hence Anne's referring to Wilfrid's trip to town. They had been actively looking for a place to purchase in the countryside around Cairo, and were in the process of finalizing the purchase of Sheykh Obeyd, an abandoned garden near Heliopolis at Ein Shams. The transaction was completed on 17 February 1882, just before they left for England.

...So that he might send a telegram to England denying the military interference so persistently attributed to Araby. The question is expected to come on tomorrow evening in Parliament in England and the telegram ought to arrive tomorrow afternoon in time to influence the debate or discussion—this will be of the greatest consequence for even now there is a danger that Parliament may be told the National Party does not exist. There is some active enemy hard at work to destroy all the good that has been gained by the change of Ministry.<sup>315</sup>

When Wilfrid met with Sultan Pasha, along with fifteen influential people from Cairo and Alexandria, they had a productive meeting, and Wilfrid had a positive impression of Sultan. Sultan was also angry about the false and divisive reports of Arabi's threats toward him. Sultan told Wilfrid that Arabi was like a son to him and would never threaten him. The other people at the meeting concurred, and further denied any confrontation between members of the Islamic Society and soldiers, another false rumor. Wilfrid prepared and sent a telegram to *The Times*, *The Daily News*, and Gladstone; Sultan Pasha planned to publish a contradiction to the rumors as well.<sup>316</sup> These efforts aimed at calming any military responses that might occur if England and France perceived mounting internal conflict in Egypt.

The contradiction letters appeared in *The Times* and the *Waqaya*, with the latter including a prominent and indignant rebuttal to the erroneous reports of military terrorism by members of Parliament from Alexandria and from Saadulla Hallabi, one of the purported victims.<sup>317</sup> With the successful publication of the letters of rebuttal and current news reports, Lady Anne expressed guarded optimism that there would be no intervention. The new government, in an attempt to publicly express its intentions, published a list of priority projects they would address immediately. One of the tasks on

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<sup>315</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 15 February 1882.

<sup>316</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 16 February 1882. Sultan Pasha was the new leader of the Chamber of Notables.

<sup>317</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 19 February 1882.

the list was the “suppression of the slave trade—in fact of slavery altogether I believe. If they do this they may do anything whatever else that they choose for the British public will in that case be sure to stick by them under all circumstances.”<sup>318</sup>

Another source for optimism was a report that London had advised Malet that the Prince of Wales proposed to send his two sons to Egypt if Malet thought they would be safe. Malet replied that the boys would be safe if Britain would not speak of intervention. The next reply confirmed that the boys would visit. “So this makes all safe—it must be now quite certain England will not be drawn into any meddling from a military point of view. And their visit if they behave well and graciously may have a good effect.”<sup>319</sup> These moments of optimism in an otherwise tense, volatile atmosphere, demonstrate the hope and optimism that underscored Lady Anne’s pragmatism, and defined her cosmopolitan worldview.

In spite of the ongoing intense political events, Lady Anne continued her practice of looking for a permanent place to live in Cairo. She and Wilfrid knew that their association with Egypt would continue; they had genuine friends in Egypt, understood the culture and language, and appreciated the high quality Arab horses. Cairo was also a good location for launching their frequent travels in the east. With their early departure for England on the horizon, Anne and Wilfrid looked at a newly recommended property for sale. After several years and many efforts to find the right property, they found a lovely garden near Ein Shams, outside of Cairo. The garden, named Sheykh Obeyd after the sheykh who had lived there in the past, would eventually become their winter home

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<sup>318</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 19 February 1882. This statement underscores Anne’s understanding of a top political and social issue in her homeland—slavery and its abolition. She believed that Egypt’s repudiation of slavery would help the English population support Egypt’s bid for liberty.

<sup>319</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 19 February 1882.

and second horse farm. Days after Anne and Wilfrid took possession of Sheykh Obeyd, they received an invitation to breakfast with their neighbor, the Ayaydeh Sheykh Saleh, at his home. In addition to warm hospitality, breakfast conversation centered upon the tension between the Nationalists and the British. Anne wrote that the conversation helped her clarify the claim of the Nationalists that “all the Bedouins from the whole of Arabia having sworn fidelity to Araby. It means the settled Bedouins (with their outside, desert branches, too, in case of need)—such as Ayaydeh, Hammadi, Howeytat, and Ouled Ali—in fact those, and only those belonging to Egypt. The Ayaydeh Sheykh said he and his people would go (with horses and camels) to fight if there was war but would not send their children to learn to be soldiers like the fellahin. The fellahin have to be taught to handle a gun. (The Bedouins, this implies, don’t need teaching).”<sup>320</sup> Anne understood the independence of the Bedouin tribes, and their traditional willingness to contract allegiance with reigning powers or with outside powers, depending on the offers they received and the apparent benefit for their tribe. Anne and Wilfrid had made important connections with many of the Egyptian and Sinai Bedouin. It was those connections that were used a few months later in opposition to the nationalist revolution.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid decided that they must take any political influence the two of them possessed and travel to London as soon as possible. By the last few days of February, Anne wrote that she and Wilfrid resolved to depart soon for England, having read the latest collection of newspapers.

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<sup>320</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 22 February 1882. The irony of this statement was that a few months later, Professor Edward Palmer departed England on a secret mission to co-opt these and other Bedouin with bribes to secure their neutrality or allegiance to England in the conflict. Palmer used the Blunts’ connections as his letter of introduction to the sheikhs. Wilfrid mistakenly thought Palmer was on a research mission. See Appendix B, on The Palmer Expedition.

Being there it will be easier to counteract false reports—everything is now distorted by the papers and no doubt at the instigation of speculators. We...have sent word to Mahmud Bey and Ahmed Tihaymar in hopes they will go to England—one speaking French and the other English they will suit to mix in English society.<sup>321</sup>

Lady Anne had a thorough approach to combating the prevailing forward policy. She chose spokespeople with language skills and knowledge, who could help transmit the message of liberty and justice to the English people. Anne and Wilfrid's decision to leave Cairo also implies that they had exhausted all possible policy-making avenues there. They believed that policy decisions emanated from London, not Cairo. When they had finally packed their belongings and made necessary arrangements for their long absence, Anne wrote that they were “finally off on our deluls, probably the last time for many a day.”<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 24 February 1882.

<sup>322</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53915, 25 February 1882. Anne must have sensed the political storm they would enter when they arrived in England. She had no way of knowing of their imminent exile, for nearly four years, from their Sheykh Obeyd garden home.

## **Chapter Six: Return to England 1882**

I do not say that on that wonderful 22<sup>nd</sup> of March he [Prime Minister Gladstone] was not for the moment in earnest when he spoke to me so humanly, but it was clear that his sympathies with the cause of right, however unfeigned, were not the law of his public action, which was dictated...by motives of expediency. The discovery destroyed for me an illusion about him which I have never regained.<sup>323</sup>

For Lady Anne and Wilfrid, returning to England in early March of 1882 proved to be an entrance to the nerve center of British response to the Egyptian revolution. On their first full day in London, Wilfrid met numerous members of Parliament in the lobby of the House of Commons, where they promised to support his views about the Egyptian situation. Their response was, “Oh, if what you say is correct of course we sympathise with the Egyptian nation’ –the thing is to make them believe it to be true.”<sup>324</sup> Anne referred to the difficulty of convincing Members of Parliament of the validity of the Egyptian revolutionaries and the Nationalist Party. One of Wilfrid’s meetings was with Charles Dilke, whose intransigence appalled Wilfrid. Dilke accused the Arabi government of having spent “half a million sterling on the army since they came into office,” a report that also circulated in the British press the same day. Dilke would not listen to Wilfrid at all, regardless of any facts or information Wilfrid had to deliver.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), 298. Wilfrid referred to his personal visit to Gladstone’s office, and the latter’s assurance of his support for Egyptian independence. Gladstone had repeatedly stated his support for independent, smaller nations, and his distaste for imperialist adventures. Within four months of this meeting, England bombarded Alexandria and invaded Egypt.

<sup>324</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 9 March 1882. This visit to the House of Commons was Wilfrid’s first attempt to influence policy-makers in their government offices. Lady Anne began her plan for a personal campaign, which she launched by going door-to-door. Her campaign for Egypt merged into her campaign for Wilfrid’s parliamentary bid, which had Egypt’s future as its core concern.

<sup>325</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, 10 March 1882, 20.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid did not believe what proved to be an erroneous report, but made inquiries to Araby and other leaders to verify the facts that led to the misinformation. The report added sums of money for a whole year, but claimed they had been spent within a few weeks. The public accusation of supposed misappropriation of funds by the revolutionaries was an early indication of the increasingly pro-status quo mood of the press and public in relation to the Egyptian nationalists. With an atmosphere of revolution, and with Anne and Wilfrid's active support of the revolutionaries, British government security scrutinized their activities and correspondence. With Anne and Wilfrid's letters going to the revolutionaries by post instead of telegraph, due to security considerations, information gathering from them was a slower process than the telegrams sent by journalists and officials in Cairo.<sup>326</sup> The timing difference was crucial as the intensity of the conflict grew.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid believed at this time that they had nothing to lose in their loyalty to the Egyptian nationalists. They knew that they had a difference of opinion with some of their friends and officials in the Gladstone administration, but they viewed this difference as a matter of knowledge rather than opinion or self-interest. Gradually, they both realized that some of their friends and political acquaintances had a more intense distaste for Anne and Wilfrid's position than the latter realized. For Anne, her less visible political activity provided her with some protection from opprobrium; Wilfrid bore the

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<sup>326</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 10 March 1882. Wilfrid, Anne, and Sabunji, worked on the translation of a letter to Araby. They did not leave translation from English to Arabic to chance. Also, Anne writes about the plethora of telegrams from Egypt and Turkey, add mss 53916, 3 April 1882. It took several days for Anne and Wilfrid to receive the response.



brunt of official displeasure.<sup>327</sup> The Foreign Office gradually adopted an attitude of “indignation” toward Wilfrid as an “interloper interfering in Egyptian affairs.”<sup>328</sup>

As tensions between Egyptians and the British intensified in the late spring of 1882, the forward party within the government distanced itself from those who opposed them, including Wilfrid. Auckland Colvin responded to one of Wilfrid’s letters in *The Times* by telling the correspondent that Wilfrid was never asked by him (Colvin) to serve as an intermediary between the Egyptians and the British, in any capacity.<sup>329</sup> Colvin’s position did not reflect the correspondence between Wilfrid and Malet in the fall and winter of 1881. Prime Minister Gladstone, through his personal secretary, Edward Walter, “Eddy,” Hamilton, encouraged Wilfrid’s sentiments on behalf of the Egyptians. Hamilton wrote often to Wilfrid, encouraging his views, assuring Wilfrid that Gladstone sympathised with him, and generally reassuring him, “I know they wish to act cowards Egypt as on all other subjects on truly liberal grounds.”<sup>330</sup> Hamilton pleaded with Wilfrid to maintain patience, stating that his superior wished to let Blunt know, “that he [Gladstone] is sensible of your kind wish to avoid embarrassing the government at this

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<sup>327</sup> Agatha Ramm, ed. *The Political Correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville, 1876-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). The Gladstone-Granville correspondence shows a definite ostracism of Wilfrid. The scope of this dissertation does not include a comparison of the correspondence in Anne and Wilfrid’s papers with those between Gladstone and Granville, but this would be a useful and enlightening study. It would show the government’s intentional maligning of Wilfrid. The editor of the published correspondence, Agatha Ramm, did not trace the correspondence between Lady Anne and Gladstone. Lady Anne’s papers were not yet available at the time of Ramm’s research, because the British Library lists Lady Anne’s portion of the Wentworth Bequest having become part of the library collection on 11 July 1964, two years after Ramm’s book was published.

<sup>328</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53916, 23 March 1882. Lady Anne reported that Mr. W. Cockerell, a Foreign Office clerk, told her friends, the Arthur Pollens, about the prevailing attitude toward Wilfrid.

<sup>329</sup> Auckland Colvin to Wilfrid Blunt, 6 July 1882, Sussex County Archives, Chichester, a division of the National Archives of the United Kingdom. Blunt mss Box 11/Colvin.

<sup>330</sup> Edward Hamilton to Wilfrid Blunt, 18 May 1882, Sussex County Archives, division of National Archives of the United Kingdom, Chichester, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt mss, correspondence.

moment.”<sup>331</sup> Hamilton asked Wilfrid to wait until Gladstone formally announced his position on Egypt. Hamilton wrote further, “I am writing under great pressure.” Wilfrid acquiesced to Hamilton’s pressure, until Gladstone’s position suddenly merged with Granville’s.<sup>332</sup> With little warning of a sea change in his position toward Wilfrid or Egypt, Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone wrote to his foreign secretary, Lord Granville<sup>333</sup> that “Blunt is quite intolerable. I wish we could forbid him the country as much as Arabi. Derby seems to sympathise with this yearning of mine.”<sup>334</sup> Gladstone’s consul-general in Cairo the following year, Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, would facilitate Gladstone’s having his wish fulfilled, as Wilfrid was subsequently exiled from Egypt for nearly four years.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1882, Lady Anne and Wilfrid lobbied actively for the cause of liberty for Egyptians. They both left early every morning, calling on friends, relatives, and politicians daily to recruit support for the Egyptian Nationalists. Wilfrid met his friends at clubs, with occasional visits to the House of Commons; Lady Anne made house calls on friends and neighbors, many of them unknown to her. Anne and Wilfrid knew that knowledge and information about Egypt were in short supply, and believed that their information could make the difference in the direction of public thought. Anne made dozens of calls each day, stopping only when she ran out of cards to

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<sup>331</sup> Edward Hamilton to Wilfrid Blunt, 18 May 1882, Sussex County Archives, division of National Archives of the United Kingdom, Chichester, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt mss, correspondence.

<sup>332</sup> Edward Hamilton to Wilfrid Blunt, 18 May 1882, Sussex County Archives, division of National Archives of the United Kingdom, Chichester, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt mss, correspondence.

<sup>333</sup> Muriel E. Chamberlain, ‘Gower, Granville George Leveson, second Earl Granville (1815–1891), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

<sup>334</sup>Ramm ed. *Correspondence of Gladstone and Granville*, 97. Letter, Gladstone to Granville, 10 October 1883. The scope of this dissertation does not analyze the process of Gladstone’s government’s ostracization of Wilfrid, but it is interesting that Wilfrid chose to withhold the publication of his own papers in an effort to refrain from embarrassing Gladstone and others in his administration.

leave when she missed catching people at home.<sup>335</sup> She made copies of Wilfrid's letters and articles when she was not busy writing her own letters or making personal calls.

Lady Anne discovered soon after their arrival in London that the Foreign Office promoted "indignation now reigning in that office against Wilfrid as an interloper interfering in Egyptian affairs."<sup>336</sup> She knew that Wilfrid's initial involvement had been at the request of the government, and this sudden change of attitude signaled the government's change in policy. The political climate was complex due to the stream of information saturating London's media. Wildly contradictory reports from Cairo appeared almost daily in newspapers. Telegrams from Cairo "are sent with or without foundation and with the evident purpose of destroying the Egyptian National Party and therefore preventing the present Ministry from succeeding in any of its undertakings."<sup>337</sup> Anne referred to the slanderous allegations of misappropriation of funds, which would undermine the credibility of the fledgling Egyptian government. As attitudes and reports gradually shifted away from support for Egyptians' bid for liberty, some government officials began to marginalize Wilfrid; Anne remained unscathed by the political changes. Regardless of the apparent decline in the government's attitude toward Wilfrid, political leaders still sought his and Lady Anne's, counsel.<sup>338</sup> Members of the Liberal and Tory Parties, moderates, and even steadfast imperialists, knew that Anne and Wilfrid had unsurpassed knowledge and experience in Egypt and the Arab world.

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<sup>335</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 15 March 1882. Anne was met at Victoria Station by her maid, Isabella Cowie, and a fly and made twenty-seven calls, "only stopped for want of cards." This campaign was Anne's effort to inform the British public about Egyptian affairs and the Nationalist Party. It also laid the foundation for her campaign efforts when Wilfrid decided to stand for Parliament the following year.

<sup>336</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 23 March 1882.

<sup>337</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 5 April 1882. Anne's perspective derived from both Egypt and England, and she could sense the effort to persuade the public against the Nationalist Party.

<sup>338</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 25 March 1882. Letters from London requesting Wilfrid's presence from Lord Granville, and others.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid's correspondence with their Egyptian friends increased daily. Their friend, Muhammad Abduh, corresponded regularly with Lady Anne and Wilfrid, providing important updates. The Sinai desert region was known for its Bedouin tribes and their availability for recruitment in times of conflict. Abduh provided regular reports of Bedouin uprisings in the summer of 1882. The Bedouin tribes, many of whom were friends of Anne and Wilfrid's, were normally supportive of Arabi and the nationalists. Abduh's reports showed that the Bedouins were apparently being recruited by the British to fight against the Nationalist forces. Anne and Wilfrid wrote to Abduh to find out the facts. Abduh sent a telegram in return, written in French instead of Arabic, so it was transcribed at the telegraph office. Lady Anne copied the wording from the telegraph office, which provided a moment of humor in an otherwise serious situation: "Les bed onions comme tout le reste de la population sont complètement jumis au gouvernement et ce que vous aete rapporte n aouen fondement." The clerk at Three Bridges transcribes bed onions.<sup>339</sup> The typographical error was funny to Anne, whose fluency in French made the message clear to her, but it showed that the agent had no knowledge of French language. Another telegram arrived later from Muhammad Abduh, written in Arabic. For this letter, as usual, Anne wanted a co-translator to verify both the language and the meaning beyond any doubt. Sabunji, her usual translator, was ill, so she asked Edward Palmer, professor at Cambridge and a well-known Arabic scholar, for help.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 25 April 1882. The exact French phrase is particularly difficult to read in this journal, but this humorous error by the telegraph office indicates both the tenuous nature of the international correspondence Anne and Wilfrid conducted, and the reason for their precise translations. It also shows that Lady Anne could find humor in the midst of stressful events.

<sup>340</sup> LAB journals, add 53916, 25 April 1882. The importance of Anne's recruiting Professor Edward Palmer here is that within two months, Palmer would be recruited by the British government for a secret mission to Egypt, for which he clandestinely used Wilfrid's contacts in the Sinai. When Palmer's party was murdered, the mission risked exposure, and Anne's journals, which also contained information from Palmer's widow's journals, provided overwhelming evidence of the government's secret mission. See Appendix B for a fuller description of the Palmer Expedition.

Lady Anne took him the letter, worked with him for more than three hours to translate it, then left it with him for a few more hours, after which she went back to read his translation. She said his translation was “too much abridged, for I caught him in leaving out several important items—which we went through as well as time permitted in rather more than an hour, I writing down the English postscript which had not been done.”<sup>341</sup> Several months after this encounter, Professor Palmer was involved in a deadly scandal, the aftermath of which was a heated battle to cover up the fact that his scholarly mission was a disguise for a top-secret government intelligence mission.<sup>342</sup>

Most of Lady Anne and Wilfrid’s social engagements had a political component to them or at least included politically informed guests. When dining with the Charles Buxtons, Lady Anne noted that at the dinner she met the American ambassador, James Russell Lowell. “Mr. Lowell seems to me to aim at ‘smartness’ in conversation and I was shocked by his views as to Egypt—there seemed to be nothing but a mocking want of sympathy—unless indeed it may be that he did not care to talk seriously of anything—which is perhaps wise in a diplomatist according to the pennywise system.”<sup>343</sup> Lady Anne

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<sup>341</sup> LAB journals, add 53916, 26 April 1882.

<sup>342</sup>Palmer Expedition. Evidence eventually revealed that Palmer had been recruited by the Foreign Office to travel to Sinai and Egypt on the pretense of collecting academic research. When the facts emerged, his actual purpose was to bribe the desert tribes with large sums of money to assist the British against the Egyptian nationalists. Palmer had asked Lady Anne for any information about Arabi Pasha in preparation for an article he intended to write for *The Standard*. He noted to Lady Anne that the information could be in Arabic or English. His use of Lady Anne and Wilfrid’s contacts in the desert proved to be important to the English war effort and detrimental to the Egyptian Nationalists. Palmer and his party were murdered in the desert, with Arabi initially blamed for the killings. These first reports prompted intense anger and discussion in Parliament about the Palmer party’s intentions in the region, and the government’s responsibility for Palmer’s widow and children. [See Appendix B, Palmer Expedition, for a fuller account] See also, House of Lords Debate, 16 March 1883, v. 277, cc672-83.

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1883/mar/16/motion-for-papers>, accessed 4/11/2011

<sup>343</sup> LAB journals, add 53916, 28 April 1882. It is interesting to note that this American ambassador had an extreme “want of sympathy,” but the American consul to Egypt, Elbert E. Farman, had extreme sympathy with Egypt, wrote a book, *Egypt and Its Betrayal*, about the appalling British invasion, and later corresponded with the Blunts.

displayed her even-handed assessment even in a situation that conflicted with her own views. She also showed the importance she placed on a dinner guest's knowledge and political position in regard to Egypt and its nationalist struggle, regardless of the guest's own nationality.

With all of the correspondence between Lady Anne, Wilfrid, and the Egyptians, Anne and Wilfrid kept apprised of events in Egypt as they tried to educate their English neighbors and politicians and to discuss the issues with those who were already in favor of Egyptian independence. Parliament put the Egyptian question on the agenda several times, only to defer discussion.<sup>344</sup> In a meeting with several friends and acquaintances, Lady Anne met the Trevor Plowdens. On leave from his post in Baghdad, Plowden understood and agreed with Lady Anne and Wilfrid, and worked to mitigate the Foreign Office's increasingly prejudiced position and growing disfavor toward Wilfrid and other independence-minded patriots. Plowden was not optimistic about changing the collective attitude at the Foreign Office, and he regretted that "the English name he says is now sinking lower every day in those parts owing to our extraordinary folly, always holding out vague hopes of support or protection which we never fulfil."<sup>345</sup>

The political climate in Britain was hardly any less charged than that in Egypt. Ireland was occupying much of the political energy of the Gladstone government, and competed with Egypt for priority in Parliament. On the same page with the above entry about Trevor Plowden, Lady Anne recorded the shocking news of what became known as the Phoenix Park murders of Thomas Henry Burke, Permanent Undersecretary for

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<sup>344</sup> LAB journals, add 53916, 28 April and 3 May 1882. A review of the Hansard Parliamentary Debates during this time shows an overwhelming concern with Ireland and its political issues, but almost nothing about Egypt, in spite of the obvious tension there at the time.

<sup>345</sup> LAB journals, add 53916, 7 May 1882.

Ireland, and Lord Frederick Cavendish, whose wife, Lady Frederick Cavendish, and Lady Anne were friends.<sup>346</sup> The two entries foreshadowed Anne's future involvement with Wilfrid in Irish politics, and the coincidence of these two entries on the same page illustrated the political links of British imperial interests in Egypt and Ireland.

In the midst of the growing intensity of British and Egyptian politics, Lady Anne was invited to a small and aristocratic gathering at Buckingham Palace to meet with Queen Victoria. The gathering was a social event termed a Drawing Room. The Countess of Portsmouth, a relative, presented Lady Anne, who documented the event in her characteristically pragmatic way—purchasing the dress, calling on Countess of Portsmouth to accompany her to the event. She described the ceremony of seeing the queen, “We got in and through and out without very much delay,” then listed several of the ladies she met. Anne did not describe any political conversation from the event, but the matter-of-fact tone of Anne's account of her attendance provides a glimpse of the egalitarian component in her cosmopolitan worldview; there was nothing pretentious or arrogant about Lady Anne.<sup>347</sup>

Lady Anne had assisted Wilfrid in drafting a letter and an ultimatum to Gladstone, asking for his assurance of a favorable position on the Egyptian question. Wilfrid wanted Gladstone's response before Wilfrid attended a meeting of the Anti-Agression League, an

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<sup>346</sup> LAB journals, add 53916, 7 May 1882. Lady Cavendish, a friend of Lady Anne's was Prime Minister Gladstone's niece. Both Lady Cavendish and Lady Anne would later become ardent Home Rulers for Ireland.

<sup>347</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 11 May 1882. The journal entries regarding the Queen's Drawing Room include a newspaper clipping that recorded the event. Lady Anne was excited about attending but did not dwell on it at all in her journals. She was more concerned with immediate political problems, such as affairs in Egypt. This is another example which indicates Judith's (later Lady Wentworth's) misrepresentation of her mother's political activities. Judith completely missed Anne's obvious preference for politics over social functions.

organization dedicated to defending and assisting “lower races.”<sup>348</sup> Anne and Wilfrid drafted a long letter detailing the events as they happened during the winter in Egypt; the short letter urged Gladstone to avoid seeing the long letter in print in exchange for his positive stance on Egypt. Lady Anne did not “feel the least confidence as to the answer being satisfactory.”<sup>349</sup> The same day, several ladies called on Lady Anne in London, one of whom was Mrs. Goschen, “no doubt with a desire to find out Wilfrid’s intentions,”<sup>350</sup> a reference to the policy-makers and Members of Parliament who braced for the contentious exposé Wilfrid might publish. Wilfrid routinely dealt with Gladstone either personally or through the backchannel of Eddy Hamilton, in an effort to influence policy without causing a political conflagration.

Lady Anne moved between preparing drafts to Gladstone and preparing to have an audience with the Queen in the same morning. Immediately following her meeting with the Queen, Lady Anne wrote, “... we had a visit from the juge mixte, Mr. van Bemmelen, who agrees to all we like about the translation,”<sup>351</sup> a reference to a book on Egypt and Europe published by Mr. van Bemmelen in French and translated into English by Lady Anne and Wilfrid. With her linguistic facility, Anne could move between worlds with ease and clarity.

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<sup>348</sup> Thomas Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), abstract. The Anti-Aggression league was founded by Herbert Spencer. Lady Anne and Wilfrid had the problem-solving, philanthropic notion to attend such a meeting to help people who were at risk, but they did not view the plight of lower socio-economic classes as one of subject races vs. superior races, or classes.

<sup>349</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 10 May 1882. Anne’s journal does not present this as an actual threat to Gladstone, but as an encouragement to him to maintain the position he had earlier proclaimed. See also, Blunt’s *Secret History*, 298, for the date—22 March 1882—when Wilfrid’s trust in Gladstone was broken forever. Wilfrid explained in his book, *Secret History*, ix-x, that he waited many years to vindicate himself because he did not want to hurt his friends’ careers by publishing all of his journals and correspondence.

<sup>350</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 10 May 1882.

<sup>351</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 11 May 1882. Van Bemmelen wrote the book, *L’Egypte et l’Europe*, and Anne and Wilfrid thought it was excellent enough to have it translated into English. Anne wrote that she liked the van Bemmelen’s.



When Lady Anne learned from a telegram from Egypt that the khedive had agreed to keep the existing ministry, Wilfrid expressed optimism for Egypt's struggle: "Wilfrid seemed more or less hopeful about the government's statement this evening..." Lady Anne, who viewed the resignation of Mahmoud Barody as "good riddance," did not share her husband's optimism, believing that there were too many forces working against Egyptian independence.<sup>352</sup> When Wilfrid went to Parliament later the same evening to hear the discussion and voting decisions, he heard "nothing satisfactory."

For this I was prepared, but it is I fear worse than only negative—from what Ralph [Lord Wentworth, Lady Anne's brother], who called at 5:30, told me of Lord Granville's speech and it seems that all they have announced was what everybody knew before, 'that they would intervene under certain contingencies which Lord Granville piously hoped might not occur.' We are as wise as before and there is nothing for it but that Wilfrid should make his statement with full particulars on Thursday.<sup>353</sup>

Anne and Wilfrid were prepared to present all of the facts if Parliament's intransigence required it.

The next morning, Lady Anne and Wilfrid sent telegrams to Arabi and to Sultan Pasha. The one to Arabi notified him that Lord Granville stated the evening before in Parliament that Sultan Pasha and the Deputies had joined the Khedive against him (Arabi). He was asked to let them know if that was untrue. The message also asked him if he and Sultan Pasha could form an alliance with Sultan as prime minister. The telegram to Sultan Pasha read, "I trust that all who love Egypt will stand together. Do not quarrel with Araby. The danger is too great."<sup>354</sup> Similar telegrams went to other Notables in

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<sup>352</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 15 May 1882. Here Lady Anne's pragmatism proved more realistic than Wilfrid's optimism. She indicated several times in her journals that she had a sense that public and official opinion were moving toward intervention and away from Egyptian independence.

<sup>353</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 15 May 1882.

<sup>354</sup> LAB journals, add 5mss 3916, 16 May 1882.

Cairo, in an effort to encourage Egyptian leaders to publish their support for their government. The Notables responded quickly, in French, which Lady Anne quickly translated, and Wilfrid sent to Chenery at *The Times*. The response stated unequivocally that the Notables were united behind their ministry. Anne and Wilfrid asked Chenery to insert the translation into the next morning's edition. Making the English public aware of the unity within the Egyptian government was as important as notifying the policy-makers; public opinion often impacted policy.<sup>355</sup>

Events changed rapidly, and so did Lady Anne's opinions and emotions about the state of affairs in Egypt. After dreading the possibility of intervention, by the third week of May, Lady Anne wrote, "better news...is that it seems quite clear that there is no real danger of intervention." Lady Anne, Lady Gregory, and Wilfrid then discussed the idea that the most recent of Wilfrid's letters to Gladstone should be sent to Lord Dufferin whom Lady Anne hoped would be sent to Egypt as commissioner. She wrote, "It seems quite clear that Sir C. Dilke is 'at the bottom of all the mischief' as to Egypt—and moreover this is now becoming known. To me it appears only the natural sequence of the transaction in the winter, the 'joint note,' and the French commercial treaty."<sup>356</sup> With Dilke emerging as the culprit of forward policymakers and Dufferin as a possible counterweight to the forward policy faction, Lady Anne noted that Wilfrid's and her decision to limit the publication of documents and opinions regarding Gladstone was valid. Lady Anne was glad that all of the documentation existed and that she and Wilfrid

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<sup>355</sup> LAB journals, add 5mss 3915, 15 February 1882. This journal entry illustrates Lady Anne's knowledge of the power of opinion in the press and its impact on policymakers' discussion. It also evokes the urgency that she and Wilfrid were beginning to feel in trying to stem the tide of opinion against Egyptian independence.

<sup>356</sup> LAB journals, add 53917, 19 May 1882. See also Wilfrid Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, 183. In addition, see Alexander Scholch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!* (London: Ithaca, 1981).

could make it available at any time because, she wrote, “I cannot feel the slightest confidence in any of these government assurances.”<sup>357</sup>

The daily efforts of Lady Anne and Wilfrid to inform British politics with their knowledge of Egypt was often shared by their close friends, Lady Gregory and her husband, Lord William Gregory. Lord Gregory, who had shared the Blunts’ commitment to Egyptian nationalism, became less confident of his own position as he spent time in London and heard the forward policy advocates plead their case. Gregory was one of the great disappointments to Anne and Wilfrid when he eventually established himself as one of the fickle friends who occupied a prominent place in the complex fabric of Anglo-Egyptian politics. With all of his support of the concept of liberty, Egyptian liberty in particular, Gregory lacked consistent courage to maintain his position on controversial issues. The Anti-Agression League, an organization dedicated to reinforcing liberty and justice for what were known as lower, or subject, races, supported Anne and Wilfrid’s position in regard to Egypt. The League called a meeting to discuss the conflict in Egypt, and Gregory agreed, along with Wilfrid, to attend and to speak on behalf of Egyptian liberty. On the day of the meeting, after dining at the Athenaeum Club, an aristocratic gentlemen’s club in London, with Thomas Chenery, editor of *The Times*, Gregory announced that he would not attend. Anne commented,

He had been dining...probably with Chenery [editor of *The Times*] and had been told by somebody next door to the F. Office and to Lord Granville that he must have nothing to do with a meeting of this sort—whether he is to have place, Governor of Cyprus or Commissioner to inquire into the state of Egypt, or whether for some other reason, he has been frightened out of attending. Sabine...was of course very much disgusted at this defection, a thing which did

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<sup>357</sup> LAB journals, add mss 52917, 19 May 1882. The government assurances included those of Eddy Hamilton, Gladstone’s personal secretary, who corresponded regularly with Wilfrid and Lady Anne. Hamilton gave assurances to Wilfrid of Gladstone’s intentions in return for Wilfrid’s withholding some of his letters from publication.

not surprise me. People don't mind being cowards and curs. But in this instance I don't like to judge till I hear, which I suppose will someday come out, the grounds on which Sir William acted.<sup>358</sup>

Lady Anne made an effort to maintain a balanced viewpoint even when she was bitterly disappointed, as she was with her friend William Gregory's "defection," or decision not to attend the meeting. Gregory had political aspirations and Anne's entry suggests that she knew that if Gregory associated himself with what was becoming an increasingly unpopular cause, he would reduce his chances for a prominent political appointment. Her reference to the Athenaeum Club demonstrates the importance of the political culture of such clubs in encouraging government policy among aspiring politicians.

Lady Anne participated with a group that attended a luncheon hosted by Lord Lymington at his family estate, Hurstbourne.<sup>359</sup> To the surprise of Anne and Wilfrid, the guests included the American ambassador to Britain, James Russell Lowell, and Lord and Lady Granville. As Anne and Wilfrid learned more about British policy in Egypt, they realized how much influence Lord Granville had on Gladstone in London and Malet in Cairo. Granville supported British intervention in Egypt and encouraged Gladstone's departure from his original liberal policy. Lady Anne wrote of the weekend excursion and luncheon discussion, "Lord Granville most affable; just as if Egypt did not exist." When the guests strolled around the grounds of Hurstbourne, the Granvilles kept themselves busy inside with Foreign Office work. Lady Anne commented, "I like Lady Granville."<sup>360</sup> Given Lady Anne's view of Granville's role in the Egyptian conflict, it was a credit to

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<sup>358</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 19 May 1882.

<sup>359</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 287. Lord Lymington, also Lord Portsmouth, was a cousin of Lady Anne and the lord of an ancient English estate named Hurstbourne (the family name was Wallop). Wilfrid explained that he and Anne had been invited long before the weekend of the party, well before the political events of the day became so intense. Both Anne and Wilfrid felt unease about being in a social setting with a powerful politician like Lord Granville, whom they respected in spite of their disagreements about Egypt.

<sup>360</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 21 May 1882.

her open-mindedness and pragmatic attitude that she could meet Granville in a social setting and maintain her composure. Two days after their shared weekend at Hurstbourne, Lord Granville authorized Malet to “act as he saw fit,” which led to the publication of Malet’s ultimatum to Arabi and the Nationalists, demanding restoration of the Khedive and the exile of Arabi, with the goal of Egypt’s return to the status quo.<sup>361</sup> The effect of the ultimatum was to galvanize Egyptian resolve rather than to frighten Egyptians into retreat. Rather than Arabi’s exile, the ultimatum resulted in Arabi’s appointment, or recall, as Minister of War.<sup>362</sup>

Correspondence between Lady Anne and her friends revealed the intensity of political feeling that permeated the atmosphere at the end of May in 1882. Henry Brand, later Speaker of the House of Commons, wrote to Lady Anne as being “very much disturbed about Wilfrid’s action about Egypt.” Brand believed that Wilfrid had a “right to his opinion but that many people will not forgive him for sending his telegrams...The time is a very anxious one and at any moment we may hear of a conflict between nations...England cannot afford to see Egypt a prey to the spirit of disorder and military misgovernment...” Brand expressed sorrow that Wilfrid “should have set himself publicly to work in opposition to the policy of his country at a time when any little spark might well set fire to the elements of conflagration in Egypt.”<sup>363</sup> Brand remained upset by his friends’ political action, and wrote to Lady Anne again a few days later in reference to

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<sup>361</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 289. Malet’s ultimatum was made at the urging of Auckland Colvin, although Dilke had the authority to approve it. See also, Alexander Scholch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!*

<sup>362</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 290. The initial Egyptian reaction to the ultimatum was Arabi’s resignation; the Khedive, under Egyptian pressure, and the government asked him to return as Minister of War.

<sup>363</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54128, 24 May 1882.

Wilfrid's (he did not really understand Lady Anne's partnership with Wilfrid in opposing British policy) "consorting with the enemy." He wrote that

It was not my intention to question the soundness of your opinions respecting Egyptian politics. In all probability they are likely to be much more worthy of attention than any which I have formed because you have had means of observation denied to me.<sup>364</sup>

Like many British friends, Brand respected Anne and Wilfrid's knowledge gained from their extensive travels. The difficulty of accepting Anne and Wilfrid's opposition to the Empire lay in Brand's traditional view of loyalty to the Crown.

Brand wrote further, in an effort to support the idea of Anne and Wilfrid's right to express their views:

Neither do I dispute the right which you have to further those opinions in every legitimate way, i.e. by argument and persuasion. But my point is this. A subject of the Queen has no right when the govt of the country has taken a definite step—such for instance as the dispatch of an armed fleet—to use any influence which we may possess to encourage a foreign power to resist such intervention.

The heart of Brand's argument lay in his next segment, and it is the first line that likely represented the sentiments of many of Wilfrid's opponents in the Foreign Office and Parliament:

Such action goes very near to the brink of treason, and if all Englishmen were to act in the same way when their country was taking a departure in foreign politics with which they were in disagreement there would soon be an end to the power and greatness of England.

Brand's concern with the "greatness of England" was the core concern for him and for his colleagues who ultimately sought to discredit Wilfrid, and, by association, Anne. Brand also objected to what he called, in the next segment of his letter, Wilfrid's

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<sup>364</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54128, 24 May 1882.

embarrassment of the government. The idea of holding the government accountable appeared to be anathema compared to keeping up appearances of unity:

You have every right to protest at home against any course of policy pursued by the govt, to argue against it and endeavour to persuade the country to change it. By you have no right to intrigue with its enemies with the view of embarrassing the action of your government.

Many thanks for your invitation. I will come down in the summer if I may—when this affair is over. In a few weeks Arabi will be forgotten and Egypt I hope once again quiet and prosperous.<sup>365</sup>

The last line reflects the British concern for Egyptian prosperity as a link to British prosperity. It is interesting that Brand viewed Arabi as an easily and quickly forgotten personality.

In each of the themes represented in Brand's letter, he voices the tenets of the British Empire of his day, and the arguments against the egalitarian liberty and justice espoused by Lady Anne and Wilfrid. Brand acknowledged Anne and Wilfrid's superior knowledge of Egypt but viewed their actions as a betrayal of the Queen, placing loyalty above public critical discussion of policy. Brand did not seem to understand that France and Turkey were a major part of the imperial system to which Egyptians objected in Egypt.<sup>366</sup> Brand's offhand view of Arabi and the Nationalist Party indicated what was likely the prevailing opinion of the movement in the House of Commons, and an indication of how easy it would be to convince the House to support the bombardment and invasion six weeks later.

Henry Brand was apparently able to set aside enough of his distaste for the Egyptian revolution to visit Crabbet a few days later, but even then, "He was in a violent

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<sup>365</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54128, 26 May 1882.

<sup>366</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54128, 27 May 1882.

state of displeasure with Arabi.”<sup>367</sup> In addition to Brand, the group of visitors on that day included Lord De la Warr, William Gregory, and Algernon Bourke. Bourke remained after the others left so that he could help create a cipher for secret telegraph messages from Cairo. Lady Anne and Wilfrid planned to send Sabine back to Cairo with this cipher available so that he could communicate confidentially with them.<sup>368</sup>

In another example of the complexity of Lady Anne’s political activities and social calendar, Professor Palmer visited Anne, asking her to help him with an article he planned to publish in *The Standard*. He wanted her to give him information about Arabi Pasha for his article. Palmer’s visit coincided with that of Julien Poinssot, a photographer, who had important manuscripts of J.L. Rousseau. When she was finished with her visitors, Lady Anne and Wilfrid attended the Foreign Office party that evening, on 3 June 1882, at the height of political tension on the subject of Egypt. At the party, she recorded some of the guests, including her brother, Ralph, and his wife; “...General Dillon,...Sir Alexander and Lady Malet, (both cordial), Madeline Wyndham and Mary, the Lascelleses, the P. Stanhopes, etc.”<sup>369</sup> The reference to the Malets’ being cordial is evidence of the tension about Egypt that loomed in everyone’s thoughts, even if unmentioned.

Between attending Foreign Office parties, showing the Arab horses of her Crabbet Stud to visitors, translating and writing letters to Egypt, managing her home and family, Lady Anne found time a few days later to read and copy the Rousseau manuscript on loan to her from the French photographer, Julien Poinssot. Lady Anne only had a few hours with this important manuscript, so she copied it until midnight on the day she had it.

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<sup>367</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 2 June 1882.

<sup>368</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 2 June 1882.

<sup>369</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 3 June 1882.



Poinsot worked as a photographer for the French government, which had commissioned him to photograph Tunisian antiquities. Lady Anne lamented that Poinsot had only been able to find part of the Rousseau manuscript in his searches.<sup>370</sup> With all of the political upheaval consuming her thoughts, Anne found time to copy important historical documents.

With politics as her main priority, Lady Anne rarely attended social events unless there was a chance of either political opportunity or stimulating conversation. She and Wilfrid attended a politically important event at the home of Foreign Secretary Lord and Lady Salisbury. After listing the well-known names in attendance, Lady Anne ended with, "...hate parties."<sup>371</sup> The party list included the Egyptian khedive's first cousins, Prince Osman and Prince Kamil, whom Anne and Wilfrid invited to visit at Crabbet Stud. Lady Anne commented that they "were very civil and made themselves agreeable." The princes wanted to play lawn tennis, apparently for the first time, because Lady Anne commented that, "The princes took to the game with great enthusiasm and were a funny sight being fat and unskillful."<sup>372</sup> In her conversation with Osman, he told Lady Anne details of the Bedouin and semi-Bedouin tribes of Egypt, and their dealings with Khedive Said and Ibrahim Pasha. Lady Anne commented that she hoped these accounts "...were more true than his assertion that the Hanadi tribe always fought and would fight in the cause of his family for love not money as they were never paid a farthing!"<sup>373</sup> Anne

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<sup>370</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 6 June 1882. Lady Anne does not describe the contents of the Rousseau manuscript. It appears that she copies the papers simply because they are old and important.

<sup>371</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 7 June 1882. The names listed as guests included the Bertram Curries, the Lascelles, Eddy Hamilton (Gladstone's assistant), the LeFebvres, the Fortescues, the Lymingtons.

<sup>372</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 11 June 1882.

<sup>373</sup> LAB journals, add mss 3917, 11 June 1882.

pragmatically entertained the relatives of the khedive while actively corresponding with the Egyptian nationalists who sought independence from the family of Osman.

By 10 June, Lady Anne read in the evening newspapers of the violence occurring in Egypt. She read of beheadings, purportedly on the part of Egyptians, and predictions that Arabi would be destroyed by Dervish Pasha, a Turkish commissioner, working for the Sultan of Constantinople.<sup>374</sup> The Khedive had requested Dervish's assistance to add legitimacy to his military efforts and to appease the dissenting parties in the conflict.<sup>375</sup> With Dervish's army and the British forces combined against the Egyptian Nationalists, the Khedive presented the appearance of a united front to return Egypt to the status quo. Anne sent the newspaper's bad news to Sabine to alert him to the anti-Egyptian reports being disseminated in London.

The Sultan of Constantinople made an effort to achieve an agreement with the Egyptian Nationalists in the midst of the conflict. The Sultan had appointed a Turkish commission to meet with the revolutionaries to discuss their grievances and to find grounds for a settlement. While the Sultan was working with his Turkish commission and communicating with Arabi and the Nationalists, a violent riot erupted on 11 June in Alexandria. The cause of the riot remained in dispute, but its result was devastating to the process of finding a peaceful solution. The Sultan's effort for a policy of rapprochement never recovered from the aftermath of the Alexandria bloodshed and destruction.<sup>376</sup> At the time, Egyptians were blamed for the violence, and Arabi was specifically criticized for his supposed inability to maintain security for citizens, both Egyptians and foreigners. The cause of the riots was never resolved.

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<sup>374</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916.

<sup>375</sup> Alexander Scholch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!*, 249.

<sup>376</sup> Alexander Scholch, *Egypt for the Egyptians!*, 250.

The British press of the day included reports from French presses as well, and in France, as in Britain, the issue dominating the policy discussion was that of prestige. The *Daily Telegraph* published a report from the French paper, *Voltaire*, which stated that there was an order for the ambassador to accept Arabi in his current position as Minister of War, as well as the possible replacement of Khedive Tewfik with Halim, “the last surviving son of Mehemet Ali.”<sup>377</sup> The British article continued with the qualification that there was no substantial support for such a statement, and that French prestige would be severely damaged in the region if such a transition took place. “No deadlier blow could be dealt at French prestige in the Mohammedan world than the announcement that the Government of the Republic had actually determined to support the adventurer who had consistently thwarted its policy and defied its fleet.”<sup>378</sup> British forward policy was publicly begging France to support British intervention by insulting French acquiescence to Egyptian efforts to gain liberty. In the same newspaper, another forward article stated even more clearly that England must intervene in Egypt with military force. Egypt was in turmoil due to “a provisional government born of mutiny and reinforced by riot.” Further, “force is at the bottom of the evil, and force is the appointed remedy.”<sup>379</sup> The writer of the article went on to say:

The first step, therefore, towards a solution of the problem is the dispersal, by superior force, of the troops who have for eighteen months subjected Egypt to a usurpation by Janissaries. The ground will then be cleared for the rebuilding up of that edifice of Egypt, prosperous and Europeanised...<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 1882, p. 5.

<sup>378</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 1882, p. 5.

<sup>379</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 1882, p. 7.

<sup>380</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 1882, p. 7.

The newspapers and forward policy-makers argued for force while Lady Anne and Wilfrid, and their allies, argued for the English idea of liberty and justice. The British papers were also comfortable with the idea of instilling European culture and trade in Egypt, with little regard for the concept of native institutions that Lady Anne and Wilfrid helped the National Party construct.

With the news of riots in Alexandria, Egypt, the politically intense atmosphere surrounding Lady Anne and Wilfrid became more inflamed. Lady Malet, Edward's mother, paid the Blunts a visit on the evening the news reached her, and she, like Henry Brand, expounded on the idea that opposing one's government's policy, as Lady Anne and Wilfrid did, equated to being a traitor. She was worried about her son's safety, which Lady Anne and Wilfrid understood, but they still felt the sting of their friends' anger. Malet was incapacitated with fever while Alexandria burned during riots, making him even more vulnerable to the violence. Anne and Wilfrid sent telegrams to Cairo to alert their contacts to Malet's predicament and asked them to help him board an English ship and to ensure his safety, which they did.

The Alexandria riots arguably provided the catalyst for the Gladstonian government to set aside what was known as its Little Englander, or liberal, non-interventionist, policy, and opened the door for the forward policy of those who opposed rapprochement.<sup>381</sup> There were numerous British bondholders of Egyptian debt and Suez Canal Company shares, including the prime minister and several Members of Parliament. The conflicts of interest were likely the pivotal but largely unknown factor at the time that prevented Lady Anne and Wilfrid from comprehending the entire political scene.

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<sup>381</sup> Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 239. The Little Englander policy refers to those who opposed Free Trade and imperial pursuits, and advocated for England to maintain trading partners without exercising informal or formal empire.

With all of their broad knowledge and understanding of Egypt and the Ottomans, they did not realize the depth of their own countrymen's conflicts of interest, including the prime minister himself.<sup>382</sup>

Journalists who sympathized with the nationalist cause in Egypt sought references from Lady Anne and Wilfrid, which contributed to the public perception of them as opponents of the British government, "on the brink of treason," as Brand had written. *Daily News* correspondent Hilary Skinner called on the Blunts to ask for their advice and letters of introduction to key people involved in the Egyptian struggle. Lady Anne provided Skinner with references to Sabine, Araby, and Abduh, in an effort to facilitate Skinner's balanced representation of Egyptian actions and sentiments. Lady Anne also gave Skinner, "whom I like," books "to read and instruct himself from on the journey."<sup>383</sup> Lady Anne appreciated being able to send letters to Egypt through the delivery of Skinner because she and Wilfrid believed that the tension was so great that "letters of introduction and letters by post will, we think, most likely not be delivered. The English government Wilfrid supposes to have 'hardened their hearts.'" <sup>384</sup>

Lady Anne's visit with Skinner was followed in a few minutes with the visit of Mr. Fairman, a resident of Egypt, who provided her with a wealth of information about the foreign intrigues occurring in Egypt. Fairman had resided in Egypt for more than two decades and his Italian wife was a lifelong resident of Egypt. In spite of his depth of connection and information, Lady Anne thought:

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<sup>382</sup> P.J. Cain and Antony G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1680-2000* (London: Longman, 2001), 315.

<sup>383</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 7 July 1882. John Edwin Hilary Skinner (1839-1894), noted journalist and linguist, served in Cyprus as judicial commissioner. He was also a liberal politician for whom Wilfrid had positive regard, advising Anne to give him "strong recommendations." Thomas Seccombe, 'Skinner, John Edwin Hilary (1839-1894)', rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, v. 50, 856.

<sup>384</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 7 July 1882.

He may be listened to with reserve until further proofs of the authentic nature of his facts can be had. He was protected I believe by Mustafa (the brother of Ismail) whom he described as ‘honest and openhearted,’ very unlike anybody else of his family in that case and it is difficult to believe the statement, and that Mustafa was in opposition to Ismail. Mr. Fairman says that because he had refused a bribe to injure Mustafa, Ismail had denied [?] him. He also told me strange stories of malversations—and also that he is ‘a friend of Araby’ and also that Sir Edward Malet had been extraordinarily foolish. At last I told him I had no more time.<sup>385</sup>

Always the pragmatist, Anne had listened carefully, refrained from complete judgment, and continued with her business. The nature of the two different conversations at almost the same time is evidence of the complicated nature of the reports surrounding the conflict.

Lady Anne received telegrams from Egypt regularly giving her updates on the events as they occurred. When she received notice that an Egyptian delegation was on its way to England, with the goal of meeting with the British government to seek a settlement and to avoid conflict, she and Wilfrid immediately notified Gladstone. They made an effort to encourage him to support the delegation and to forestall what appeared to be the forward, militant policy that Britain already displayed with warships poised in Alexandria’s harbor. The Egyptian envoys were scheduled to arrive in Brindisi, Italy, on 8 July, which happened to be three days before the bombardment of Alexandria by British ships.<sup>386</sup>

With daily attacks on Egypt, and by association, Wilfrid, in the newspapers, Lady Anne understood that the government and the public were well on their way to rationalize support for the imminent attack on Egypt.

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<sup>385</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 7 July 1882. E. St. J. Fairman was a freemason who helped establish the first Masonic lodge, the Bulwer Lodge, in Cairo. Anne writes that his wife was Mademoiselle Gibano, of Venetian origin, but born in Cairo.

<sup>386</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 7 July 1882. Anne and Wilfrid had a close relationship with Eddy Hamilton, Gladstone’s personal secretary. Eddy was a conduit for quick messages when such an emergency arose.

Bombardment appeared certain and the newspapers crowded over the fifteen minutes' firing which was to destroy the forts, rout the Egyptian army and place the 'status quo' in its original condition. However now, at the last moment, the Khedive Tewfik, has abandoned his false friends and thrown himself on his own people—that he will not go on board an English ship.<sup>387</sup>

Lady Anne summarized newspaper articles that suggested that Araby would realize his mistake in resisting the orders “of the Great English nation, etc.”<sup>388</sup> She also encountered an elderly acquaintance, Mr. Blount of Imberhorne, who related to Anne his visit several weeks previously with M. Joubert, a French bondholder with interests in Egypt. Joubert had deciphered a telegram in which, he related to Blount, it said, “Sherif Pasha will be Minister when Arabi’s head will have been cut off.” Such correspondence was an indication of French involvement in the political events of Egypt, as well as the ill feeling Arabi inspired in France and England. The remaining news of the day reported the “destruction of four forts but no sign of surrender.”<sup>389</sup>

Lady Anne and Wilfrid, normally traveling from Crabbet and London daily, did not go to London during the bombardment. They received newspapers which described the destruction of Alexandria in the aftermath of the bombing and the departure of the army and much of the population. Lady Anne’s letters from Swiss journalist and Egyptian sympathizer Jean Ninet and Sabine, contained updates on the conflict and the plan of Egyptian defense, which included, “that they have arrangements to destroy the canal in five hours but this would be done only if it is used for the conveyance of ships of

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<sup>387</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 10 July 1882. Anne had written in a somber mood the day before. It is palpable from her writing that she is saddened by the attack and by the acceptance of it in England. See also, Elbert E. Farman, *Spoiling the Egyptians*, for his account of the bombardment. The American consul was on board an American vessel during the firing on Alexandria’s forts.

<sup>388</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 11 July 1882. The *Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, and the *Daily News*, carried daily articles about Egypt and the bombardment.

<sup>389</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 11 July 1882. Blount told Anne a friend of Sherif’s had given this message to Joubert, but he could not remember the name of the source. Sir Edward Charles Blount (1809-1905), banker and railway promoter. Isabelle Lescent-Giles, ‘Blount, Sir Edward Charles (1809–1905)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 6, 299.

war bringing troops. These letters do not seem to have been opened. M. Ninet is at one with the Egyptians as always.”<sup>390</sup> The emotional effect of the conflict with Egypt was apparent. Lady Anne wrote, “Wilfrid said he should devote himself to ruin Gladstone’s reputation. This will be needless; it will ruin itself and he them.”<sup>391</sup>

Lady Anne reacted indignantly at reports in the newspapers “full of the atrocity of burning Alexandria and the massacre by ‘convicts or Bedouins’ (!! ‘of Christians’ What Christians? and Europeans What Europeans? I wonder. The loss of life is lamented by one of them and ‘What is still more serious,’ ‘of property.’ All the newspapers except the *Daily News* are reeking with bloodthirsty greed to devour Egypt.”<sup>392</sup> That evening, papers reported that “Arabi had fled in a boat.”<sup>393</sup> Lady Anne hoped for news from Egypt but knew that mail was interrupted or shut down.

More grim news followed, along with anti-nationalist reports. “The newspapers sing the praises of the ‘faithful and courageous Prince,’ the Khedive, who is now ‘safe’ in keeping of the noble British navy and marines and admirals and lieutenants.”<sup>394</sup> The day, a Saturday, with the typical wide variety of Lady Anne’s daily life, included a visit from Sir Donald Currie, his daughter, and a guest, who were interested in seeing the Arab horses at Crabbet. After looking at the horses, Lady Anne invited them for luncheon, at which time Currie asked Wilfrid to share his views about Egypt. Lady Anne remarked

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<sup>390</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 12 July 1882. Jean Ninet, author, *Arabi Pacha* (Berne 1884). Ninet is sometimes cited as John Ninet, a Swiss journalist who lived in Cairo during this time.

<sup>391</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 13 July 1882.

<sup>392</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 14 July 1882. All underlines are Anne’s, and the quote, “What is still more serious,…” is double-underlined in her journal. Anne is obviously extremely upset by the reports.

<sup>393</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 14 July 1882. This report began with a statement by Sir Charles Dilke, whose source was a telegram from Mr. Cartwright. Anne described this report in her journal, but the transcript of an interview on the subject can be found at the following site:  
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1882/jul/14/egypt-military-operations-the-suez-canal>, accessed 9 July 2010.

<sup>394</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 15 July 1882.



that this was their first Saturday without a party in a long time,<sup>395</sup> an indication of the widespread national mood, as well as Lady Anne's feeling of being politically isolated.

A week after the bombardment, Lady Anne remarked that there was an outcry in Italy against the attack on Egypt. Newspapers in England were still "bloodthirsty and violent," with the exception of one correspondent who acknowledged "having heard that all is in good order at Arabi's camp."<sup>396</sup> Lady Anne also received letters from friends and acquaintances, such as one from Henry Brand, "with a concluding violent passage against Egyptians." Another, more welcome letter, arrived from Laura Malet, who expressed "horror at the wickedness of the bombardment," and who wanted to "forward her indignation."<sup>397</sup> Anne received another letter, from Major Robert Napier, governor of Gibraltar, "expressing the opinion that the blood of the Egyptians is on the head of the government here."<sup>398</sup>

From Constantinople came reports of the Sultan's fears about his Caliphate, due to agreements between Arabi and the Hejaz Arabs, the Sherif [of Mecca] and the Tunisian and Tripoli Arabs. The Ottomans had long claimed a relationship to the historic Caliphate to validate their own legitimacy. Lady Anne understood the importance of the alliance between the Sherif of Mecca and any Arab or Muslim leadership; control of the

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<sup>395</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 15 July 1882. Anne did not comment further on Sir Donald Currie's conversation, which was unusual. Her comment about not having a party suggests her feeling isolated during such an intensely political time in which she was on the unfavorable side of British policy. Sir Donald Currie was a wealthy shipowner and politically active businessman, Andrew Porter, 'Currie, Sir Donald (1825–1909)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 14, 740.

<sup>396</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 19 July 1882.

<sup>397</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 19 July 1882. Henry Robert Brand was a friend of Wilfrid's although they did not share political alliance. Mrs. Malet refers to Consul-General Edward Malet's mother.

<sup>398</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 19 July 1882. The Napiers and the Blunts were long-time friends. Robert Cornelis Napier, (1810-1890), governor and commander-in-chief of British forces at Gibraltar at the time of this note, T. R. Moreman, 'Napier, Robert Cornelis, first Baron Napier of Magdala (1810–1890)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004, v. 40, 186.

Islamic holy places provided traditional legitimacy for a governing power in the Muslim world. The Sultan's concern for the Caliphate was almost a metaphor for his concern that his empire faced destruction if the Egyptian forces had military and spiritual support from Arabia. The Sultan's concern heightened British awareness, if that were possible, of the critical nature of the Suez Canal and its eastern neighbors.

Lady Anne received news from Sabine, who was in Alexandria just before the bombing, and watched events unfold from a French ship in the harbor. Sabine's ship traveled from Alexandria to Port Said, where Sabine sent a message to Arabi. Sabine had warned Arabi against trusting the American soldier, Charles Pomeroy Stone (Stone Pasha), lieutenant general of the Khedive's forces. Stone Pasha ultimately did convince Arabi to trust him, and Stone reportedly used that trust to betray the Egyptian nationalist army by claiming that the British would not use the Suez Canal.<sup>399</sup> Arabi believed that the British would not attack from the Suez Canal because he thought Ferdinand de Lesseps, the French engineer, was securing it. Stone's claim seemed to reinforce Arabi's belief, and facilitated Arabi's strategic error. The British army, aided by their use of the Canal, finally defeated Arabi's forces at Tel El Kebir on 12 September 1882, nearly five weeks after the bombardment of Alexandria; the bombardment which was initially predicted to require no more than fifteen minutes to secure an Egyptian surrender.

For Lady Anne and Wilfrid, the aftermath of British invasion and subsequent occupation of Egypt shifted their focus from supporting the Egyptian Nationalist Party and working toward Egyptian independence, to defending the revolutionaries in Egypt from trial and execution. Once Britain had invaded Egypt and defeated the nationalist

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<sup>399</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53917, 23 July 1882. When Sabine finally found a ship to take him away, he experienced maltreatment on the steamer because of his being considered a friend of the National Party.

army, the Egyptian question evolved into a policy of explaining what appeared to be an imperialistic European invasion. The arguments for the invasion ranged from one of protecting the lives of British citizens, to protecting the Suez Canal and its vital trade route, to upholding the status quo between the European powers and the Ottoman Sultan. All of the arguments appealed to a sense of British imperial prestige and responsibility; Lady Anne viewed them as hollow excuses for an abuse of power and a miscarriage of justice.

While Anne and Wilfrid pursued efforts to defend the Egyptian nationalists in the press, to convince the British public that their government pursued policies against English ideals, and to influence post-invasion policy, official reaction sought to discredit the Blunts to save face. Granville wrote, “[Evelyn] Baring heard all that Blunt had to say and declared it to be all wrong. I should be afraid if we sent him Blunt’s letter, that he might suppose we attached importance to him.”<sup>400</sup> Clearly Granville supported the process of marginalizing the Blunts’ influence. Wilfrid was eventually denied entry to Egypt, in 1884, and when his suspension was lifted nearly four years later, he and Anne had to agree not to engage in any political activity there. Once they returned to Egypt, their activities and their visitors were closely monitored by government spies. With their political options severely limited, Anne and Wilfrid concentrated on developing their farm outside Cairo and on improving their stud of Arabian horses.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid maintained contact with many of their Egyptian friends who had participated in nationalist politics, but their meetings were social in nature, rather than political. Neither Anne nor Wilfrid wanted to risk a confrontation with

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<sup>400</sup> Ramm ed. *Correspondence of Gladstone and Granville*, 101. Letter, Granville to Gladstone, 14 October 1883. Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer, had just arrived in Egypt as Consul-General, replacing Auckland Colvin; the Blunts had already been associated with Egypt for nearly a decade.

Cromer's administration. Anne continued to correspond with Egyptian sympathizers in England, as well as the Egyptian, Arab, and Indian friends from their desert travels. Anne and Wilfrid's former friend, Edward Malet, declined an assignment in China, but accepted a new assignment to Brussels. Anne wrote with her usual frankness, "He can't do much harm at Brussels. Perhaps he has learned something and would not now, had he another chance, make such a mess as he has done in Egypt between his own blunders and those forced upon him by the government at home."<sup>401</sup> Considering the grave consequences of Malet's misjudgments and tragic mistakes, Anne's assessment of him was extraordinarily gracious.

In the aftermath of the deep disappointments and defeats on the Egyptian Question, the revolution, the defense of the Nationalists, and the exile from Egypt, Lady Anne and Wilfrid looked to the east for comfort, strength, and a useful purpose.

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<sup>401</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53920, 20 April 1883. See also, Peter Mansfield, *The British in Egypt*, 20. Mansfield describes Malet as lacking "any real understanding of the Egyptian mind..." and a man whose "character failed to rise to the exceptionally difficult circumstances of the time."

## **Chapter Seven: From Egypt and England to India 1883–1884**

All these things I have heard make me sad. It cannot with truth be said that the British Empire in India was “founded on justice”—and unless it repents and mends its ways while yet there is time surely the whirlwind must burst over it and shatter it.<sup>402</sup>

By 1883, Egypt and India were closely intertwined politically and socially. British officials trained in India often followed their Indian posts with Egyptians ones, taking their families with them. Recent Egyptian politics had illustrated the close relationship between India and Egypt. Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer, served in Egypt and India before returning to Egypt as consul-general in 1883. Auckland Colvin, born in India, also served in official posts there before his assignments in Cairo. Colvin became the British representative on the Dual Control in 1878, and controller-general in 1880.<sup>403</sup> One of the important lessons that Indian civil servants and officials took with them to Egypt was the legacy of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. When Lady Anne and Wilfrid traveled to India after the Egyptian revolution, they realized the lasting effect the mutiny had on imperial officials. Lady Anne and Wilfrid’s position in India, as well as the nature of their efforts, had to adjust to the imperial mind of India.

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<sup>402</sup> LAB journals, add. 53936, 17 January 1884. Lady Anne was expressing her grave disappointment in British policy in the years following the Egyptian revolution, the bombardment of Alexandria, the invasion of Egypt, and the current occupation. She was not personally exiled from Egypt, but with Wilfrid’s exile, she was virtually exiled as well. In India, she saw the mature effects of empire. This quote is also evidence of Lady Anne’s own political growth and confidence since her earlier trip to India, her experience in Egypt, and in England in the aftermath of the revolution. Her reference to the “Whirlwind” is interesting since Wilfrid wrote a poem entitled, “The Wind and the Whirlwind,” about the British invasion and occupation of Egypt.

<sup>403</sup> B. R. Tomlinson, ‘Colvin, Sir Auckland (1838–1908)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, v. 12, 831.

India's British imperial experience had begun officially after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, when the British government replaced the corporate power of the East India Company. Egypt's imperial experience with Britain, on a corporate level, began two decades later, with rampant British investment and eventually the Dual Control. By 1883, many of the British official lessons learned in India, and opinions of eastern peoples in general, made their way into the official, and social, British mind in Egypt. With the advent of the Liberal administration of William Ewart Gladstone in 1880, Indians hoped for reform, while Egyptians hoped for British support in their quest for liberty. The three years between 1880 and 1883 were politically intense in Egypt and in India.

For Lady Anne and Wilfrid, the events of the Egyptian revolution, the intensity of political conflict, and the defense of Ahmed Arabi, the Egyptian nationalist leader, and his colleagues, were exhausting, both financially and emotionally. Anne and Wilfrid had decided that this second trip to India would have a broader scope than their first one, and would have two distinct political purposes, as discussed with Gladstone and his private secretary, Edward Walter, "Eddy," Hamilton.<sup>404</sup> The first purpose was to explore the idea of restoring the Egyptian National Party, including the exiled leaders, to Egyptian politics, and allow them to participate in a new Egyptian government with British support. The second purpose was to explore the Indians' views of British rule, hear their grievances, and research the idea of a Muslim university in India.<sup>405</sup>

In 1883, when Lady Anne and Wilfrid were planning this tour of India after an absence of nearly five years, the Viceroy of India, chosen by Queen Victoria herself, was

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<sup>404</sup> Dudley W. R. Bahlman, 'Hamilton, Sir Edward Walter (1847–1908)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, v. 24, 785. Widely known to his friends as "Eddy," Hamilton was a lifelong civil servant and diarist, serving as private secretary to Prime Minister Gladstone, as well as holding several posts in the treasury department.

<sup>405</sup> LAB journals, add 53934, 30 December 1883.

Lord Ripon.<sup>406</sup> Ripon's charge from the Gladstone administration had been to bestow happiness on his Indian subjects through British political reforms deemed long overdue.<sup>407</sup> After three years of Gladstone rule, with its reaction to the Egyptian revolution, its bombardment of Alexandria, its invasion of Egypt, and its ongoing occupation of Egypt, India's former buoyancy had deflated into a gloomy political mood. It was a stark contrast to the optimism of three years earlier, when the same Gladstone made inspiring proclamations of liberty and liberal reforms.<sup>408</sup>

Gladstone initially endorsed Anne and Wilfrid's idea of repatriating the Egyptian revolutionaries, but he asked Wilfrid to discuss the idea with his new consul-general in Cairo, Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer.<sup>409</sup> Wilfrid delivered this ambitious plan to Baring, who dismissed the idea after meeting with Wilfrid for less than an hour. Baring did not believe in the inherent ability of "subject races" to govern themselves, so the idea of bringing Egyptian nationalists back to Egypt during his administration was impossible.<sup>410</sup>

Whatever Mr. Gladstone might dream or pretend to dream about restoring the National Party and recalling the exiles, nothing was further from Sir Evelyn's

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<sup>406</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, Elibron Classics, unabridged facsimile reproduction of original. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), 2. Blunt stated that he believed Queen Victoria had personally chosen Ripon to serve as viceroy, and that this appointment was intended to promote reform and optimism in India, a complementary pursuit to the goals of Britain.

<sup>407</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 3. The advent of the Liberal Party's Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, in 1880, had launched a mood of optimism for reform in India. Reform, for Lady Anne and Wilfrid, would include broad education of the indigenous population, as well as an upwardly mobile political framework that could and would lead to self-government. British reforms did not allow for as much progress for native self-government.

<sup>408</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 4.

<sup>409</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 9.

<sup>410</sup> Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 255. Also see Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid, *Egypt under Cromer*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 62. Lutfi al-Sayyid explores Cromer's reign from the Egyptian perspective, and the effect of his policy of governing "subject races." Lord Cromer published a book, *The Government of Subject Races*, in 1908, in which he defended his theory that subject peoples needed the guidance of a superior nation, such as England.

mind. He had no intention whatever but that of supporting the Khedive and the party of reaction.<sup>411</sup>

With Baring's clearly negative response, Lady Anne and Wilfrid knew that their participation in Egyptian politics had come to a close for the near future.

Not only would the Nationalist Party in exile not be allowed to govern Egypt as Lady Anne and Wilfrid had hoped; they discovered that the current Egyptian government under Sharif Pasha was suffering more restrictions under Baring with the latter's efforts to govern Egypt efficiently. The new Granville Doctrine requiring Egyptian ministers to carry out British policy had reduced any measure of autonomy that Egypt's government previously enjoyed to one of operating as a front for English policy.<sup>412</sup> In addition, Baring's administration utilized the Turco-Circassian ruling elite that had flourished under the khedive and Ottomans and did not solicit, train, or encourage Egyptian bureaucrats or administrators.<sup>413</sup> In an effort to minimize criticism and encourage cooperation for the occupation, Baring, Gladstone, and Granville ultimately portrayed Lady Anne's, and especially Wilfrid's, involvement in British-Egyptian politics as "interference" rather than as "collaboration" on the same political issues.<sup>414</sup>

In spite of what appeared to be little or no chance of the exiled Nationalists returning to share in Egypt's government, Lady Anne and Wilfrid continued with their plan to visit Arabi and his small coterie of nationalists living in exile in Ceylon. Visiting the nationalists presented its own set of consequences since the British government did

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<sup>411</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 14. Wilfrid's comments here reflect his eventual realization that Gladstone's words would neither complement nor govern Gladstone's actions.

<sup>412</sup> Afaf Lutfi al Sayyid, *Egypt under Cromer*, 57.

<sup>413</sup> Afaf Lutfi al Sayyid, *Egypt under Cromer*, 60-61. Also Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer*,

<sup>414</sup> Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 255. Owen provides a balanced view of the complicated relationship between Wilfrid Blunt and Lord Cromer. While the two men held opposite views, and sometimes clashed over policy, Cromer quietly used Blunt's advice on occasions, such as his support of lawyer and reformer, Sa'ad Zaghloul; the repatriation and support of Muhammad Abduh as mufti of Al Azhar, and the release of nationalist leaders from prison. Cromer also named Zaghloul minister of education in 1906.



not condone the visit; the government denied permission after Lady Anne and Wilfrid had already been to Ceylon. After their visit in Ceylon, Anne and Wilfrid decided they would actively pursue the idea of enhancing the role of Muslim Indians in higher education as well as government. They hoped that while Britain worked out its withdrawal from Egypt, which the British government proclaimed was imminent, Anne and Wilfrid's efforts in India would help Egypt as well. Egypt was their focus, and India was in a supporting role for what Anne and Wilfrid hoped would be a successful bid for the independence of Egyptians and other native inhabitants of imperial territories. Anne's commitment to serving a useful purpose could be continued in India while Egypt's turmoil gradually settled into a British-controlled occupation.

Anne was more confident in her own political activities by this time, and comfortable with her place as a woman traveling in a largely male world. With a decade of eastern travel, the Egyptian revolution, Arabic language, and on-the-spot education to her credit, Anne, sometimes with Wilfrid and sometimes without him, met with Indian leaders of various groups, both Hindu and Muslim. Lady Anne and Wilfrid planned to seek the views of the Hindu and Muslim leadership as well.<sup>415</sup> Their plans ultimately included listening to the accounts of simple Indian workers, Nizams, Shia Muslim leaders, Sunni Muslim leaders, and Hindu leaders. They dined with nawabs and rajas, students and workers, heard their stories, and attended receptions in their (the Blunts') honor.

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<sup>415</sup> Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 138-9. Metcalf identifies as one of the differences between Muslims and Hindus in British thought at this time derived from British and European experience with Muslims in Europe and the Middle East. Muslims and Hindus were perceived differently in contrasting sets of Orientalist perceptions. Most importantly, Muslims bore the brunt of the blame for the Indian Mutiny of 1857, which left an indelible fear of, or hostility toward, Muslims in the broader British mind since Hindus were less known, the British focused on them as collaborators). Also, the earlier Moghul Dynasty, which the British displaced, was Muslim.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid's arrival in Ceylon provided an indication of the esteem in which the Muslims of Egypt and Ceylon held them. When their steamer anchored in the harbor, the Muslims, Egyptian and Indian, formed their own regatta to greet the British couple who had demonstrated such important support for them and who had meant so much to their freedom efforts. The Muslims also had planned a banquet in honor of the Blunts, complete with a feast, speeches, and fireworks. The banquet met with opposition from the governor of Colombo, but the Muslim community protested and managed to go forward with their plans.<sup>416</sup> Anne treasured the Muslims' show of appreciation, writing that it felt as though she and Wilfrid were arriving at home.<sup>417</sup>

Egypt was never far from Lady Anne's mind, and after visiting the Egyptian exiles, she wrote a letter to Arabi's wife, who was still living in Cairo with their children. Anne wrote to encourage Arabi's wife to look forward to joining her husband in Ceylon. Anne remarked in her letter that the island was beautiful and that the houses, people, and educational opportunities for the children would make life pleasant there. Anne wrote:

Not only is it your husband's inmost wish to have you here with him, but I can now assure you from what I have myself seen that it would be a great advantage for all your children both sons and daughters—both for health and education—and that you would find yourself in a position of the greatest honour and respect.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> LAB journals, add 54128. Letter, 18 October 1883, Columbo.

<sup>417</sup> *Lady Anne Blunt, Journals and Correspondence, 1878-1917*, Rosemary Archer and James Fleming, ed. (Cheltenham: Alexander Heriot, 1986), 157. Entry in journal, 19 October 1883, written six days later, due to Wilfrid's illness (malaria) upon landing at Colombo. Anne and Wilfrid stayed in the home of revolutionary Mahmud Pasha Sami. Anne wrote that their reception was remarkable, and had Wilfrid not been so ill, she would have been able to acknowledge the Muslims' efforts with more attention.

<sup>418</sup> LAB journals, add 54128, 12 November 1883. Lady Anne wanted Arabi and his family to be reunited and as happy as possible under the circumstances of the exile. She kept in touch with Arabi's wife in an effort to help the former not to feel abandoned. Anne and Wilfrid also argued on the exiles' behalf for financial support for the families of exiles.

Anne continued by writing that she regretted that Arabi's wife had stayed behind and was living in distress in Egypt, when other Egyptian wives enjoyed a measure of comfort in Ceylon with their husbands. Anne expressed further encouragement to Arabi's wife, observing, "All the Muslim community here unite to do honour to the Egyptian Pashas, and especially to Arabi Pasha." Anne hoped that Arabi's wife would move to Ceylon soon, but if not, Anne vowed to see her upon her return to Egypt after their tour in India, signing her letter, "Your friend, AINB."<sup>419</sup> Anne also received letters from Madame Ali Fahmy, whose husband was Arabi's colleague in the revolution. The deep affection and appreciation shown by Madame Fahmy for Anne and Wilfrid confirms the good fortune the revolutionaries enjoyed even in their exile, "I beg to pen you these few lines, with my utmost feelings of love and regard to all the comforts we have obtained from you both."<sup>420</sup> These letters indicate the intense empathy between Muslims in India and those in Egypt, and the growing sense of a shared burden of English occupation.

During their travels Lady Anne and Wilfrid also attended official British functions and dined with British officials. They stayed in the British Government House of various districts, and also stayed in local Indian guesthouses and hotels in villages.<sup>421</sup> It is possible that Anne and Wilfrid's warm reception by the Muslim community in Ceylon, their correspondence, especially Anne's, with the wives of the exiles, and their active plans for another Muslim university in India, all contributed to Wilfrid's eventual exile from Egypt. Anne and Wilfrid were comfortable in the company of "natives," as Indians

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<sup>419</sup> LAB journals, add 54128, 12 November 1883.

<sup>420</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54128, 2 November 1883. There are more letters from Madame Fahmy to Lady Anne which are undated.

<sup>421</sup> From Lady Anne's descriptions, it is not clear where she and Wilfrid stayed on every occasion. It is possible that they stayed in official circuit houses, but she infers that they stayed in local housing on occasion.

and Egyptians were often called by British officials. Anne and Wilfrid's ability to communicate with the natives, in addition to their political sympathies, made them formidable foes to the British officials who promoted a forward policy.

In Madras, Anne received a letter from a fellow British traveler that contained a report that Viceroy Ripon had been advised not to receive the Blunts.<sup>422</sup> With her pragmatic attitude, she inquired to discover who issued such an order, and why. India had appeared to be experimenting with liberal ideas during the first few years of the Gladstone administration, and Ripon seemed to be implementing gradual reform.<sup>423</sup> Lady Anne was surprised that their mere presence could incite enough fear for anyone to make such a request of the Viceroy, but the exchange of administrative personnel between India and Egypt created political consistency between them.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid's experience in Egypt helped them realize the importance of a university for Muslim education, such as Al Azhar University in Cairo. Once in India, Anne and Wilfrid researched the idea of a Muslim university in India that would serve a similar purpose to that of Al Azhar, particularly in its days of great prosperity. Anne and Wilfrid met with Muslim leaders in Bombay to discuss details of where such a university should be located. The leaders rejected Calcutta, but responded favorably to the idea of Hyderabad as a good choice.<sup>424</sup> With that idea in mind, Lady Anne and Wilfrid decided to pursue the idea with the Nizam of Hyderabad.

Following the pattern they had set a decade earlier, the Blunts made a conscious effort to acquire a three-dimensional view of the land in which they traveled, as they laid plans for the Muslim university. Being cosmopolitan came naturally to Lady Anne and

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<sup>422</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 10 January 1884.

<sup>423</sup> Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 200.

<sup>424</sup> LAB journals, add 53934, 31 December 1883.

Wilfrid as they familiarized themselves with the talents and the grievances of their Indian and British hosts. Anne and Wilfrid made it their mission to grasp the sentiments of the Muslim community in India as well as the Hindu. Part of the process of learning about life for Indians in the Raj included dining with native leaders. Anne wrote that she and Wilfrid accepted an invitation in Mahmudabad to dine with Raja Amir Hassan, an Oude taluqdar, in his palace in Lucknow, an invitation that pleased her. They were seated at a long table set in a European style, a fact that disappointed both of them. Lady Anne and Wilfrid asked Raja Hassan “if they [Indians] had adopted the European style of knives and forks.” The Raja replied that, “No, this is the first time that I dine with a European.”<sup>425</sup> Anne and Wilfrid expressed their appreciation for his hospitality but also asked that on their next dining occasion, would the Raja please host them in the same way he would host his own people? When the Blunts declined the wine he offered them, Anne noted that he seemed relieved and asked for it to be removed.<sup>426</sup> Anne and Wilfrid settled comfortably into the realm of Indian culture and dinner without wine, just as they could have enjoyed dinner with a glass of wine at a party in London. Lady Anne, like Wilfrid, did not see her world from a Eurocentric point of view, and she was happy to adjust to the culture in which she found herself.

In Allahabad, the Raja invited them to join him for a drive through the countryside, but Wilfrid’s illness delayed the occasion. When Wilfrid was finally able to go, he and Anne rode with the raja as he showed them some of the results of imperial

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<sup>425</sup> LAB journals, add 53936, undated, but on or near 15 January 1884. Anne and Wilfrid respected Indian traditions, just as they respected Egyptian and Arab traditions, and they did not expect the latter to adjust to European ways.

<sup>426</sup> LAB journals 53936 15 January 1884. While many British Victorians traveled in the east, most travelers took their Britishness to the lands of their travels; the Blunts made an effort to absorb the cultures as they found them in faraway places. This is one of the traits that classified them as rooted cosmopolitans.

policies. Their route took them along miles of road along which they saw dozens of ruined houses, followed by a causeway named Victoria Street, lined with more ruined houses. When Anne asked the reason for the destruction of so many homes, the answer was the building of the causeway. The project required the families to move so that British engineers could destroy the houses. Few, if any, of the victims of this project received any compensation for their loss and many were “reduced to poverty and mud huts.”<sup>427</sup>

During their conversations, Lady Anne began to realize how many incidents owed their beginning to the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The Raja told her of an incident that happened in Moradabad in April 1858. A group of Indian noblemen, many of them related to the raja, gathered to pay their respects to the British civil and military authorities in the aftermath of the mutiny of 1857. Due to their loyalty to the British, they believed they would be thanked for services rendered to Britain during the mutiny:

...but instead of the reward they expected, they were seized and made away with. Some say they were blown from guns, others that they were hanged, others that they were shot, but no certain news reached their families to whom not even their bodies were given. All their property was confiscated and made over to the Nawab of Rampur and a few others supposed “loyal,” as a reward for the very services performed by those unfortunate noblemen who were killed—the Nawab of Rampur giving out that it was he and not they who had rendered service.<sup>428</sup>

Anne wrote, in response to the raja’s and others’ stories, “All these things I have heard make me sad. It cannot with truth be said that the British Empire in India was “founded on justice”—and unless it repents and mends its ways while yet there is time surely the

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<sup>427</sup> LAB, BL add 53936, 17 January 1884. Lady Anne recognized injustice when she saw it and would work to rectify it if possible.

<sup>428</sup> LAB journals add 53936, 17 January 1884. Anne heard the Indian side of the imperial story and her journals reflect her broader awareness of the effect of empire on India, and on the British legacy of liberty and justice.

whirlwind must burst over it and shatter it.”<sup>429</sup> The Indian Mutiny had created fear in the imperial mind, and Anne could see the British response to that fear in the series of stories and tours of destroyed buildings and homes. Seeing the response to the mutiny in India made the British response to the Egyptian revolution appear to have a similar element of fear mixed with, and followed by, repression.

The next day, in further conversation with Raja Amir Hassan, Anne learned that at the time of the mutiny, the civil authority for Britain at Moradabad was Cracroft Wilson. Wilson had a Hindu clerk named Ganesh Pershad Chambey. The clerk, Ganesh, later boasted to the raja, “I was the cause of the death of those noblemen.” Further explanation revealed that Ganesh sought to acquire a bribe for himself through the Nawab Majju Khan by telling the khan that Sir Cracroft Wilson wanted R30,000 from him (the Khan). The Khan replied that he knew Wilson and that Englishmen did not take bribes, so he refused to give the money to Ganesh. Ganesh proceeded to poison the mind of Wilson so that eventually the noblemen were arrested and executed without further inquiry.<sup>430</sup>

In the aftermath of the execution of the noblemen, a British civilian, Mr. Batten, made an effort to convince the government to provide some compensation or at least funds for maintenance of the children of the executed noblemen. His efforts were in vain, “although it was afterwards admitted that they had done no wrong. The children remained without provision and have been supported by other relatives. . . . Sir A L said that he would do what he could but could make no promise—that in times of mutiny and rebellion injustices must necessarily be committed in the haste of action.”<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> LAB journals 53936 17 January 1884.

<sup>430</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 18 January 1884.

<sup>431</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 18 January 1884. Anne’s account corroborates Thomas Metcalf’s argument that the mutiny instilled long-term fear into the British mind. See also, Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 160.

The importance of this event to Anne was twofold. The grave injustice was known to Indians, who lost respect for British authority in the process of the executions and resulting poverty of the victims' families. It was a clear example of her country's injustice toward its colonial inhabitants, with a callous cover up to absolve the responsible parties from criminal justice. Anne told Raja Amir Hassan that she would like to know the details of any other such cases of injustice or execution about which he knew.

The raja proceeded to tell Lady Anne and Wilfrid another incident, this one pertaining to a Hindu who was still alive, Raja Gholab Singh. The story he told as recorded by Anne:

He saved a number of European ladies and children and sent them under escort from Pratapgarh, his fort, to Allahabad. But he gave command of the escort to a kinsman of his own who had a (real or pretended) grievance against him about some property and this man on arriving at Allahabad represented himself as being the cause of the rescue of the ladies and children he had been ordered to escort. In consequence the estates of the Raja were confiscated and given to the relative. The old man still lives in poverty and the raja knows him.<sup>432</sup>

Anne realized that this injustice was not only on Britain's part, but also on the part of the dishonest kinsman who betrayed his own relative to British authorities. The British responsibility lay in not providing a framework for justice for the Raja's efforts. British officials also neglected to investigate such reports and pursue justice.

The process of discovering how the British Empire affected native-born Indians included the process of learning about their familial relationships. The Raja Amir Hassan was comfortable enough with Anne to discuss his own family, and to enlighten her about some of the social traditions of his region of India. Anne and the Raja discussed his

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<sup>432</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 18 January 1884.



family's origin, beginning with their moving into Oude 600 years before. Their family tradition has been to marry into families equal to their own. Anne noted that the raja mentioned this as a contrast to the nizam's family custom of "never marrying anyone but living with inferior low born women so that as the raja said, no family with pretensions to descent could give a daughter in marriage to the nizam." Anne commented to the raja that she had heard that the present nizam, traditionally a Sunni Muslim, hoped to break this custom and marry a well-born girl. The raja knew about this possibility and the potential girl was the younger daughter of Sir Salar Jung, whose family traditionally observed Shi'a Islam. Apparently the father had no problem with the proposal, but his wife and mother absolutely refused to give their consent.<sup>433</sup> Anne's experience with the women of the families of sheikhs in the deserts of North Africa, Syria, and Arabia, and Egyptians of all classes, gave her the background to understand the importance of a traditionally Shi'a family's daughter marrying into a traditionally Sunni Nizam household. Anne was also learning more about the lives of Indian women and their status within their families. This experience contributed to Anne's cosmopolitan worldview, sense of justice, and the confidence to pursue political change.

Anne asked the Raja about his father's death which brought another story of life under the Raj. The raja's father was lying ill in one of his forts [Anne's notes show that she was unsure of the exact name of it] when the English army took over another of his forts at Mahmoodabad that was not defended. The officer in charge, Major Reid, ordered the family house blown up because in the cellar, which was full of pickles and preserves, he found caches of vinegar. Reid reported that "he had found a store of drugged or poisoned wine placed there with the evident intention of being drunk by our soldiers (it

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<sup>433</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 18 January 1884.

really was vinegar and Raja A. Hassan's father had in fact forbidden the manufacture of wine on his estates for which prohibition he used to pay to the king a fine yearly of £2000—R20000 to compensate for the loss of revenue to the royal treasury..." Raja Amir Hassan had the destroyed family house rebuilt and moved into it just as the same Major Reid, now Colonel Reid, was appointed commissioner or collector at Mahmudabad. Reid visited Raja Hassan, on which occasion the raja reminded him of the event of the past and welcomed the colonel to his newly renovated home. Colonel Reid apologized for demolishing the house, having made a mistake about the vinegar in the cellar.<sup>434</sup> Anne was disappointed in the hasty and destructive action of Reid, but she was pleased that he had the decency to apologize for his actions.

The raja's family history continued with the story that his father, who was ill at the time of the mutiny, considered sending his wife and son to Moradabad where they had other relatives, "just when and where their unhappy relations had been or were being killed which was not known to them till a year or so afterwards." At that time, the titular king and Begum mother, with her young son, were enroute on their flight and stayed for a few days with the raja's family. The raja's father intended to leave with them and go to Moradabad with his family, but he died. Upon his death, the raja's mother and Amir Hassan went to the family fort where the uncles and his mother proclaimed the son as the new raja. His mother then decided to stay at the fort and "throw in their lot with the English. And so it was done."<sup>435</sup> This story explained how this one family managed to become one of the allies of British authority, even though it occurred largely by accident.

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<sup>434</sup> LAB journals add mss 53936, 18 January 1884.

<sup>435</sup> LAB journals add mss 53936, 18 January 1884.

Anne and Wilfrid's travels caught the attention of British officials who were apparently concerned with their activities in India. Anne and Wilfrid had stayed in Allahabad for several days and during their stay and the British undersecretary sent a carriage for them to use for their errands. They sent and received telegrams from nawabs and Anne sent one to Lady Lyall that they should arrive that evening at the Government House in Allahabad. While at the post office, the postmaster came to the lobby exclaiming, "Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Blunt?" The postmaster had held two letters for Wilfrid and Anne so that they would be safely delivered. When Anne and Wilfrid opened their letters from home, they discovered that "the Ripons had been forbidden to receive us. Very likely true. But who by? Her Majesty or the GOM?"<sup>436</sup> Such mixed signals from the British imperial government became standard procedure as the British became less adept at handling the Blunts' ability to assess and analyze imperial policy on the spot. Anne and Wilfrid's cosmopolitan perspective became a threat to imperial government but British response to it was uneven; sometimes the administration welcomed them and now the administration was forbidden to receive them. By contrast, the Alfred Lyalls in Allahabad did receive them at Government House, where they stayed for several days and attended social occasions. The inconsistent policy of the Foreign Office and India Office at this time was likely due to the fact that imperial

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<sup>436</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 10 January, 1884. Having the viceroy forbidden to receive the Blunts in the Government House was an effort to marginalize the effects of the Blunts' influence on British officials. By denying them the legitimacy of being received, it would send a message to the broader group of officials to give them a wide berth. This uneven response is also an indication of the varied policies within the government itself. The term, "GOM" was an acronym often used at the time to indicate Prime Minister Gladstone, the "Grand Old Man."

An example of Anne's ability to handle politics and home life at the same time: Just after the note about the Ripons being forbidden to receive them, Anne sketched a pretty border around a short paragraph about a letter Anne received from Minnie Pollen, her daughter Judith's governess, who had taken Judith to the bishop. The bishop had advised Judith to take her first communion at Christmas. Anne wrote in Arabic, "al Hamdulillah!" meaning, "Praise God!"

policy itself was changing at the time. Egypt and India were suddenly, in a way, joined through the shared experience of British occupation, even though that experience for Egyptians was a new one. The normally friendly official attitude toward Anne and Wilfrid became an attitude of wariness as the forward imperial policy replaced the more trade-oriented policy of previous years.

Local Indian presses displayed a similarly inconsistent response to changing imperial policy and to Anne and Wilfrid's Indian travels. While they were in Allahabad, Anne read articles in *The Statesman* and *The Englishman*, which published opposing viewpoints about imperial politics. *The Statesman* published daring articles that criticized British officials in Hyderabad; *The Englishman* published a small paragraph that stated that "*The Statesman* will be called to account for its attacks," followed by an article announcing Lord Ripon's departure for Hyderabad in two weeks. The article remarked that Ripon would be fortunate to have the opportunity to "utilize the special knowledge which has been acquired—with reference to the whole of the disputed points in the Nizam's capital—by so able and trustworthy a student of law and politics as Mr. J.E. Gorst." Anne commented that "It would be a strange proceeding if the Viceroy were to consult as his adviser the counsel retained purposely/professedly/professionally [word difficult to read] and paid by one of the contending parties between whom he will be called on to make his decision!!! [Anne's emphasis]"<sup>437</sup>

While they were in Allahabad, Anne and Wilfrid received a letter from their erstwhile host, Sir Alfred Lyall, who expressed disgust at the:

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<sup>437</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884. Observations such as this created discomfort for British officials and arguably led to their ostracizing the Blunts, or at least their marginalization. British officials wanted to be able to operate without the scrutiny of people with the breadth of knowledge of Anne and Wilfrid.

Violent attack in yesterday's *Pioneer* on Wilfrid and stating that he had written to the Aligharr collection and has taken every opportunity of saying to others that Wilfrid had no desire or intention to promote "disloyalty" in any sort of way. A private p.s. suggests that it would be as well not to enter into any particular intimacy with Sami Ullah. Why? However we have promised to stay with him and it would be too late to alter that now even if some explanation of this mysterious collusion were given.<sup>438</sup>

Sami Ullah represented an element of dissent, due to his commitment to higher education for Indians, and the imperial government understood that his grievances would resonate with Anne and Wilfrid.<sup>439</sup> If his grievances, and those of other Indians, found resonance with Anne and Wilfrid, then those grievances would eventually appear in print in India and in London. The longer Anne and Wilfrid were in India, the more London's fear of them revealed itself during their travels.

Anne and Wilfrid drove with the raja and with Ferid ud Din, Maulvi of Cawnpore, to tour the Husseinabad Imambara in Lucknow. This building, a shrine used for Shi'a observances, was a replica in miniature of the Taj Mahal. Muhammad Ali Shah had founded it, and created a trust to administer it. The Imambara was designed to provide a place for Shia festivals and necessary pensions for family members. Recently, the trust's administration had been given to a Hindu protégé of Sir G. Cowper, at which time a tower was built. Anne wrote that as they entered the mosque and were in the process of removing their shoes, the Hindu secretary urged them to leave on their shoes saying, "all English people do,"—of course I paid no attention to this—and Raja A H made some remarks as to the bad taste of a Hindu being appointed to a Mohammadan religious trust

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<sup>438</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 20 January 1884. Sami Ullah was a leader in higher education, as well as an instructor at the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh.

<sup>439</sup> Sami Ullah was also a rival of Syed Ahmed Khan, who was the head of Aligarh College. The rivalry was based partially on the fact that if another Muslim university were founded, there would be competition for funding between both of them, even though the proposed new one would be in Hyderabad. See Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 158.

and taking upon himself to invite people to keep on their shoes.”<sup>440</sup> Anne understood the respect implied by adhering to religious traditions, and the lack of respect confirmed by ignoring them. The appointment of a Hindu implied disrespect toward Muslims. Such an appointment was also evidence of British favoritism toward Hindus, or at least a British effort to create discord between the two religious communities. Creating discord between Hindus and Muslims provided the small British ruling class with more security since discord would preclude a Hindu-Muslim alliance against the British.

The return trip from the Imambara shrine took Lady Anne and Wilfrid through the areas of Lucknow where demolished buildings provided stark reminders of the mutiny. She wrote again about this travesty and asked their hosts how long it took to complete such a destructive project. The answer was about six months, during which time teams of engineers, with large numbers of workers to assist them, systematically blew up the old palaces and buildings to provide “lungs to the city” and a garden for the Cowper Tower.<sup>441</sup> Anne knew that historic buildings and mosques provided any nation with sources of pride and cohesion; destruction of them was a blatant display of power and disrespect, and Anne was disappointed by her government’s lack of character in such a wanton project.

In writing these accounts of the fate of families, cities and shrines, Anne reflected a sense of frustration, first at Wilfrid’s being attacked, and then at British disregard for religious respect or etiquette. Her frustration also empowered a sense of immunity she had developed toward the warnings of the officials and bad taste of the shrine secretary. She and Wilfrid had already survived the trials of desert travel, a revolution and exile

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<sup>440</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 19 January 1884.

<sup>441</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 19 January 1884.

from Egypt, and misrepresentation in the press. Anne had begun to display a confidence that likely derived from the very fact of their independence, financial and political, along with their cosmopolitan commitment to justice and truth. Anne's commitment to truth extended to her loyalty to her host, the raja, who forbade her to publish his account of his family's misfortunes at the hands of the English. He said, "I do not think it would look well, as you are my guests."<sup>442</sup> She understood his protectiveness toward her as well as his own vulnerability under the Raj. She acceded to his wishes, but was prepared to expose British injustice toward Indians.

The Muslim community had asked Wilfrid to speak at a meeting, and people began to arrive in large numbers. Anne estimated 300-400 people in the hall when she arrived, and later reports estimated the crowd eventually reaching close to 1,000. Wilfrid's speech was translated simultaneously during the ninety minutes in which he spoke. Anne wrote that after a few halting moments in the beginning, the speech went well. Wilfrid began by acknowledging the introductory speech which included the advantages of British rule in India. Wilfrid said that:

the Mohammadans of this country had now determined to accept the present state and to forget their past glories as conquerors and rulers and seek a better and nobler glory, that of excelling in the arts of peace—and he recalled the achievements of the Arabs in learning and commerce and science and how the first footing gained by Islam in India/Ceylon and the southern coast was by the Arab merchants who traded and preached...

There was great applause at this reference to exchanging past glories for a better sort of triumph. In fact as he went on he carried his audience with him. He proceeded to point out how in his view in which many Mohammadans to whom he had spoken in India concurred, the Mohammadan community must bestir itself to promote education according to its own ideas if it is to hold its own in the struggle of competition and fit itself for an increasing share in the administration

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<sup>442</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 19 January 1884.

of the country which the tendency of the age will necessarily bring into the hands of natives of the country.<sup>443</sup>

Wilfrid's speech prompted many of the maulvis and audience to request a copy of his notes, from which he had strayed in his enthusiasm for his topic. Anne wrote that Wilfrid promised to send people copies of his speech upon request. After the speech, when they had retired to the raja's house, one of the mulvis, Abdul Hai, presented Anne with his Arabic treatise on his political allegiance to Wilfrid.<sup>444</sup> Anne showed greater confidence in her own participation in what were becoming her anti-imperial politics. Anne's experience in Egypt helped prepare her for the political experiences in India.

The Muslims who had attended meetings for and with Anne and Wilfrid, showed their appreciation for the support they gained from the Blunts' efforts on their behalf.<sup>445</sup> When Anne and Wilfrid departed from the Allahabad station, a group of twenty "Muhammadan gentleman of Allahabad were waiting at the station but...remained standing outside until Sir A Lyall's train had gone. Then several of them came onto the platform to say goodbye to us."<sup>446</sup> The leader of the group asked Wilfrid for his address in England, and provided his own as well. Wilfrid responded by saying that he "would be glad to hear from the Mohamadans of Allahabad at any time," and if they had any complaint to make he would do all he could for them. Following this exchange, the

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<sup>443</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 20 January 1884.

<sup>444</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 20 January 1884.

<sup>445</sup> The chronology of Anne and Wilfrid's travels is difficult to confirm at times. Anne often kept more than one journal, and she often revisited her journals and revised them a few days after events took place. With travels in India, her revisions and insertions present chronological challenges, even with Wilfrid's books and journals as a guide.

<sup>446</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 Jan 1884. See especially, David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2005), 16-17. Alfred Lyall had an enduring mistrust of Muslims, a fact that was not lost on the Muslim population. Lyall did not believe that Britain could continue to dominate the nation of India and impose its foreign culture. He wrote that, "Ireland was a thousand times more nearly assimilated to Britain than India was, yet after 700 years its inhabitants were still conspiring against the detested Saxon." The Indians' knowledge of Lyall's power probably contributed to the Muslims' hesitation to gather on the rail platform.



Muslims left and Anne commented that she thought they had been warned by a station official to vacate the platform.<sup>447</sup> Anne was gaining awareness of the risk Muslims took in gathering publicly to show appreciation for Anne and Wilfrid.

A similar scene of Muslim support greeted the Blunts upon their arrival at Cawnpore,<sup>448</sup> where approximately 100 Muslims waited to welcome them. The leader and mulvi, Ferid ud Din, was a Subjudge in Cawnpore. With a one-hour lapse in their journey, the Blunts met with the group outside the station. Anne requested that Ferid ud Din provide her with a list of some of the participants so that she could thank them. Ferid ud Din then told Anne that he was joining them again in Lucknow at the invitation of the Raja Amir Hassan, which would give him an opportunity to supply her with the list.<sup>449</sup> The group of Muslims waiting to greet the Blunts grew as fifteen or more arrived at the platform. These latter people were of a poorer class and remained standing with their eyes fixed on the Blunts. When the train departed, the group saluted the Blunts.<sup>450</sup> Anne noted that as the group of Muslims grew, they separated into three or four groups rather than being a large crowd. She observed railway employees and police watching them. Their saluting the Blunts signaled their knowledge that these English people had their interests at heart. The Indians' appreciation of Anne and Wilfrid was reminiscent of the Egyptians' appreciation of them in the recent months and years.

Lucknow provided a similar experience for the Blunts, as their arrival brought Muslim leaders to the station platform dressed in their best clothes. The head of this group was Raja Amir Hassan, who presented some of his cousins, princes of the Oude

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<sup>447</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

<sup>448</sup> Cawnpore was the British spelling for the city that was renamed after independence, Kanpur.

<sup>449</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

<sup>450</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

family. His nephew recited a welcoming address in Arabic, since the hosts knew the Blunts spoke Arabic. Anne could tell that the boy had memorized the passage (Arabic was not his language), and when he lost his place, she interrupted him with gracious greetings in Arabic so that his mistake went unnoticed to anyone else. Anne remarked that their being able to speak Arabic, even though the Indian population spoke Urdu, gave them a distinction among the Muslim people.<sup>451</sup> Anne's discretion in helping the boy who was reading showed her true concern for helping a young Muslim maintain his composure in a public setting, and showed her empathy for people who struggled for independence and dignity.

Lady Anne and Wilfrid had come to India, in part, to explore the possibility of starting a new Muslim university there. In the course of conversations with Raja Hassan and other Muslim Indians, Anne and Wilfrid supported the idea of the Muslim university's being located in Hyderabad.<sup>452</sup> Raja Amir Hassan, Anne and Wilfrid discussed at length the university that they hoped to found.<sup>453</sup> Raja Amir Hassan was a friend of Syed Huseyn Bilgrami, who worked for Sir Salar Jung upon the raja's recommendation. This close connection provided the Blunts and the raja with relationships that provided them with confidence in each other's sincerity. After their conversations about the university with the raja, Anne and Wilfrid discussed the idea of such a university with the Nizam of Hyderabad.

The Raja, after city tours, conversations about family, imperial politics, and the Muslim university plans, was comfortable enough with Lady Anne and Wilfrid to discuss

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<sup>451</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

<sup>452</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *India under Ripon* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), reprinted 2005, Elibron Classics, Adamant Media Corporation, 120.

<sup>453</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

with them his personal plans for a pilgrimage to Mecca. Lady Anne and Wilfrid, with such recent travel experience in Arabia, advised the raja to make his pilgrimage to Mecca by way of the Baghdad route. Wilfrid encouraged the raja by asserting that making his pilgrimage would benefit his body (reference to the raja's liver ailment) and his soul. Lady Anne and Wilfrid also told the raja about their meeting with Ibn Rashid, and provided references for him as a contact during his sojourn. Lady Anne and Wilfrid shared their cosmopolitan, international, experience with the raja, which provided a valuable connection between a leading Muslim of India and a leading Muslim of Arabia. This valuable conversation ended just in time for Anne and Wilfrid to merge back into the world of imperial Britain and attend the Tenth Hussars' Ball, held at a former palace called the Eurasian Club.<sup>454</sup> Anne and Wilfrid could indeed travel between worlds without a misstep. Just as they had engaged with Egyptian revolutionaries in Egypt, then joined their British compatriots for social functions, so Anne and Wilfrid combined the two worlds of the occupied and the occupier in India.

At the Hussars' ball, the Blunts had "found [themselves] in an unknown world except the Franklins, a newly arrived couple from England, and Lady Lyall and Major Brabazon." Anne and Wilfrid had just met the Franklins, also en route on their tour of India, when the latter told the Blunts that they planned to "march" with Colonel Ward in the Central Provinces. The Franklins also asked for their (the Blunts') advice about finding out the true situation in India. Anne and Wilfrid suggested to them that they stop in the villages along the way and talk with local inhabitants. This would be the only way to really ascertain the life led by Indian subjects of the empire.<sup>455</sup> Anne and Wilfrid did

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<sup>454</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 16 January 1884.

<sup>455</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 16 January 1884.

not make an effort to impart their own knowledge to the Franklins, but encouraged the latter to gather their own information. Anne assessed the guests by writing that, as they left after an hour and a half, “the ladies, as it was remarked to me by Mrs. F. were on the whole a queer looking collection.”<sup>456</sup> The contrast between the activities in which Anne and Wilfrid engaged with Indians, and the social life of the Raj, was immense. Anne’s cosmopolitan view was her own, and Wilfrid’s his, and they were both comfortable in allowing others to find their own perspective.

After their intensive political and developmental conversations with the raja, Lady Anne and Wilfrid arrived back at Government House, received again by Lady Lyall, who presented them with an invitation to another ball to be held at Government House.<sup>457</sup>

Anne wrote,

We were suddenly back in the world of Anglo India, a violent contrast to the serious one we had just left for we had been talking with Raja Amir Hassan on grave questions of past and future. It was only for a few moments and we were again seated in the open carriage and continued our previous conversation. Raja AH invited us to visit him some future day [inshallah] at his country home 33 miles from here. I understood that his headquarters are at Mahmudabad and he has specially asked me to visit his wife....she will be much disappointed to miss you....The government did not take away any of his estates but razed the family town mansions where the ground was cleared round the Imambara, a magnificent group of buildings...<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 16 January 1884.

<sup>457</sup> Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ), 140. Lady Lyall’s husband, Alfred Lyall, had only been in India for two years when the mutiny of 1857 occurred. Alfred always harbored mistrust of Muslims, believing that the mutiny was largely at their instigation, even though later evidence proved Hindu participation in addition to Muslim. Lyall received the Blunts hospitably, and his views toward Muslims were tempered by the time of their visit in 1883, but he was ambivalent of the Blunts’ views. David Gilmour, in his book, *The Ruling Caste*, 238, quotes Lyall, in reference to Blunt’s criticism of the Raj, “[He] abuses us roundly, and rather unworthily, for he suggests that all the good hospitality we gave him was wrung out of the starved ryot, and that altogether we are a set of incompetent bloodsuckers.”

<sup>458</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

Anne and Wilfrid accepted the raja's invitation to accompany him on a tour of the countryside to visit more important political and historic sites. Anne wrote more about their host, Raja Amir Hassan:

At the time of the Mutiny our host was a child (he came of age in 1867) and is now 36 only. His father at first took part with the rebel forces but on some Englishwomen and children being killed in cold blood by order of..... he left them and retired to his estates and died in the country during the mutiny. The government took possession of this his only son who was educated first at the Benares college and then passed the entrance exam for the Calcutta University when, coming of age, he was asked to enter at once on the management of his estates.<sup>459</sup>

Anne respected her young host for successfully taking over as head of his family at such a young age. She was also able to view the Mutiny with a pragmatic attitude, rather than to allow it to be an emotional event. She viewed it as a part of the indigenous citizens' struggle against foreign occupation, a cause she understood. The Egyptian revolution of the previous year would possibly leave a similar legacy after nearly three decades, just as the mutiny had left its legacy in India.

As they drove by acres of damaged or razed buildings, Anne observed with palpable anger the widespread destruction of these important, historic, and beautiful structures. The carnage took place as British revenge for the Mutiny of 1857. In Lucknow, while Raja Amir Hassan was giving them a tour, she wrote about what she saw.

There must have been the most reckless destruction of houses and palaces that ever took place, in the destruction of the Lucknow buildings as he pointed out to us large tracts formerly covered with buildings—all destroyed—after the mutiny was quelled. But the redistribution of buildings not destroyed seems to me worse than this wanton demolition. For here not only the Post Office in a palace and the

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<sup>459</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

Dispensary in a mosque but there are tombs converted into milliners and other shops, actually bought and sold over.

And in the public park a very beautiful Barieh, or ..... like a reliquary, an object to hold... which the Shias venerate, now stands under a tier only as an ornament. This of marble with pierced lattice work sides.

This sort of thing causes more ill feeling than worse injuries. Not only tombs but mosques have been used for all sorts of purposes and where there was no excuse such as in the case of the Imambara which could be considered as an important military post.<sup>460</sup>

Anne described the Imambara as an architectural treasure, detailing its lines, scale, and ornamentation. She also wrote that the Imambara, though “restored to the Mohammadans,” has been placed in charge of the same trustees who have [succeeded—cannot read word here] in erecting a tall red clock tower in honour of Sir George Cowper, funds which were intended for the feeding of Mohammedan poor.<sup>461</sup>

Anne also wrote an interesting account of the Residency, which was under siege during the mutiny, and the parties to the siege. She described the Residency as being left as it was after the siege.

It is a large group of buildings in a defensible position being on rising ground. We were shewn the cellars occupied by the ladies so as to be out of shot... there were about 6 or 7000 troops of the besieged and perhaps 30000 besiegers but these were not united. There were two parties among them, the Shias who said we had better make terms with the English and demand the restoration of [not sure of word] to Oude and the acknowledgement of the young prince (a son of the present ex-king) as sovereign. The Sunnis said No, it is a sin to have any transaction with these enemies of our country and our faith and we ought to kill every one of them. Thus the discussion of counsels produced hesitation and delay and then Havelock fought his way up and relieved the garrison. Raja A. Hassan advised us to read Kaya's History of the Mutiny—as the fairest account to be found among writers in English.<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

<sup>461</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

<sup>462</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 15 January 1884.

When Anne and Wilfrid left Raja Amir Hassan, Wilfrid suggested that in his opinion, the Residency should be repaired. He said that if he were given the opportunity, he would ask the government to repair it rather than leaving it in its present state of disrepair. Its present state gave rise to “feelings of ill will,” rather than allowing people to forget the negative effects of the mutiny. The raja said, “We have forgotten our history and our past power and glories—we are quite happy and contented under a government of foreigners,” and that the ruined Residency, with its connection to the mutiny and the war, should not be preserved.<sup>463</sup> The Raja seemed almost resigned to accepting the fact of occupation in favor of maintaining peace and stability. India had more years of experience with occupation; Anne could imagine that Egyptians would eventually reach the same level of resignation so that their lives under imperial control could be as normal as possible.

Wilfrid and Lady Anne kept the university project in a priority position in their conversations with Muslim leaders. Their experience with Al Azhar University in Cairo, and its sheikh, Muhammad Abduh, provided Anne and Wilfrid with an example of the necessity for a quality resource for Muslim education. They met with Syed Mohamed Ibrahim, Mujtahid and High Priest of the Shias in Allahabad. Syed Mohamed discussed with the Blunts the need for help in encouraging education and reviving the madrasah that formerly existed in the Imambara. The Nawabs of Oude had patronized and subsidized the madrasah with R2300 per month, allowing students from distant areas of the province and Hyderabad to attend the school with campus lodging and an allowance. When the kingdom ended, the subsidies ended, and the school eventually closed. Wilfrid asked Syed Mohamed about his opinion of a Muslim university in Hyderabad, to which

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<sup>463</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 16 January 1884.

the latter replied that Hyderabad was a Sunni area and this madrasah had served Shias.<sup>464</sup> He did not believe that putting the two together would be beneficial. A series of leaders visited Anne and Wilfrid to discuss this idea, each providing his perspective on Muslim education in the provinces.<sup>465</sup> Anne and Wilfrid made an effort to merge what Anne had always called a “useful purpose” with local ideas and opinions, so that the university would be well supported.

Anne and Wilfrid accompanied Raja Amir Hassan to the only functioning madrasah (“school” in Arabic) in the area, a Shia one that accepted Sunni boys as well. The school divided the boys according to age and Wilfrid asked to examine the boys in the older group, ranging in age from twenty to twenty-three. His first question was one of history, to which the mulvi responded that the school did not teach history, “only arithmetic to the rule of three, reading, writing, and a little medicine and religion.” Wilfrid remarked that it was a pity that the boys did not learn history, and the mulvi agreed. Wilfrid understood the value of a population’s knowing its history, especially under occupation by a foreign power.

## **THE MUTINY**

It is apparent in Anne’s writings that the Indian Mutiny of 1857 had left raw nerves in the British government. She makes many references to British officials who mention the mutiny in the context of Indians’ part in the rebellion. As Anne and Wilfrid planned their trip, Lyall and Captain Rose discouraged them from visiting Indore, where Holkar was the Maharaja of Indore. Lyall and Rose referred to Holkar as “low bred

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<sup>464</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 17 January 1884.

<sup>465</sup> LAB journals add mss 53936, 17 January 1884. The “third visitor was Raja Tasadduk Rasul Khan of Jehangirabad (also related I believe to the Oude family). He is the largest human being I ever saw being tall and enormously fat but of an intelligent countenance—it is a problem how anyone with any wits can let fat so get the upper hand.”



(Maratha)” and “uncouth.” Rose told Anne that Holkar had been condemned to death after the mutiny but his sentence was reduced. Anne asked about Holkar’s part in the mutiny and was told that Holkar “allowed his troops to mutiny and they went off to join the rebel forces.”<sup>466</sup>

Anne’s conversation with the British officials who witnessed the mutiny resulted in her writing,

It seems to be considered that the mutiny could have been stopped but for an accident—the troops that started it from Merout [Meerut] left that place for Delhi and cavalry were sent in pursuit. But the cavalry lost their way and never came up to the mutineers. Capt. Rose said another mutiny might burst out at any time. I said if it did it would be our own fault—even that one ought not to have taken people by surprise ought it? He said every colonel in those days thought his own regiment loyal and other people’s ready to mutiny—that proves then that disaffection was amply known of.<sup>467</sup>

#### **ILBERT BILL**

Anne wrote that she, the Lyalls, and the Stuarts had a conversation with the Chief Justice of the Northwest Province about the new Ilbert Bill. The bill was under intense discussion as it was designed to allow Indian courts to judge the misdeeds of British subjects in India. The chief justice told Anne and the others that the native judges of his district opposed the Ilbert Bill because, he said,

they were not competent to try Europeans being unable to enter into their ideas of motives or modes of thought—that the most distinguished among them had told him so over and over again and had said they could not understand what those Bengalis wanted by making a row on the subject. That the proceedings of those native magistrates who tried cases in the country places amply proved their unfitness for that they were simply ‘disgraceful;’ that the natives even the best of them are without ‘moral sense’ such as we English possess. That in proof of this one of their distinguished leaders had confessed to him that if a man of position, a

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<sup>466</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 14 January 1884.

<sup>467</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 14 January 1884.

rajah and wealthy were to commit a disgraceful crime such as forgery and suffer his penalty he would afterwards be able to be reinstated in 'society' and nobody would think more of him. Query what society [Anne's underline].<sup>468</sup>

Anne responded to the chief justice's argument by stating that, "Surely, it is some blame to the authorities who appoint native magistrates who are unfit for neither European nor native could be named to an office if unworthy." She then added that she had been told on several occasions that the authorities did not appoint the best native judges to such responsible positions. The natives observed to Anne that this scenario was repeated often enough so that they thought the British authorities chose the worst among them on purpose. The unfitness of judges was not limited to natives, either; there were also many unfit English judges.<sup>469</sup> Anne recorded her thought that, "Sir R.S. seems to me to be under a delusion if he thinks there is no feeling as to the Ilbert Bill here, for judging from what I have heard I should fancy just the contrary."<sup>470</sup> Anne did not drop this subject. The next day, she asked Alebar Huseyn about this discussion and he "flatly contradicted the assertion [regarding criminals' readmission to society]. As to people who have been convicted of some crime and afterwards try to reenter society he said that it was sometimes owing to govt. [Anne's emphasis] influence and pressure that such persons get in again."<sup>471</sup>

Later the same day, Anne and Wilfrid attended a meeting hosted by Muslim leaders, led by Mulvi Ferid ed Din. Wilfrid spoke to the group, thanking them all for their warm welcome to him and to Anne. He spoke of his new book, *Future of Islam*, recently translated into Urdu. He then spoke to the audience about the necessity of the Muslim community's being committed to education. He said that it was a necessity for them to

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<sup>468</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 11 January 1884.

<sup>469</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 11 January 1884.

<sup>470</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 11 January 1884.

<sup>471</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 12 January 1884.

“exert themselves” to accomplish such a goal. Anne described being “touched by the affection shewn [Anne’s spelling] in welcoming us and by the earnest and cordial manner in which those present greeted us.”<sup>472</sup>

One incident that became known as the Patna Insult Case illustrated both the imperial attitude during the Raj and the rising influence of Lady Anne and Wilfrid as they traveled in India. The case involved a group of Indians, led by a Nawab Ali Khan, who was a good friend of Anne and Wilfrid’s. The group congregated at the Patna railway station to express their appreciation for Anne and Wilfrid and to wish them well on their journey. The Blunts and other passengers were on the train, waving and talking out of their window, when a Scottish doctor in another car swung his cane out the window at the Nawab and used harsh and insulting language to chase the natives off of the platform. Anne and Wilfrid were horrified and filed a complaint with the stationmaster, after which Wilfrid sent a letter to Lord Ripon. Lord Ripon replied that Wilfrid’s report should be edited so that the details would not be on the record; in return, Ripon committed to pursue the incident, make restitution, and reform the laws regarding insults to natives. Lady Anne wrote that it was due to the support they received from their friends at the Patna station that caused the stationmaster to pursue the Blunts’ complaint.<sup>473</sup> Wilfrid commented that “the matter being treated in this way was a prodigious sensation as it was the first time an Englishman had openly taken part with the natives against his own countrymen.”<sup>474</sup> Anne and Wilfrid’s cosmopolitan perspective did not see their

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<sup>472</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 11 January 1884.

<sup>473</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 8 January 1884. Also see Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 142. Ripon served as viceroy from 1880-1884. His administration laid the groundwork for the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, which bears resemblance to the Blunts’ efforts to influence agrarian reform during Ripon’s administration. Also LAB journals, add mss 54128, 8 January 1884, letter to Lady Anne from Syed Reza Hossen, apologizing for the incident, and offering to take more action against the offending “European.”

<sup>474</sup> Blunt, *India under Ripon*, 142.

countrymen any differently than they viewed other countrymen. They saw this incident as an egregious act of one human with superior power against another in a position of lesser power, in a manner destructive to both, and they acted upon their cosmopolitan conscience. Indians expressed appreciation for Lady Anne and Wilfrid's action on behalf of the natives. Raza Hosan wrote to Anne: "I thank you most heartily for the sincere interest you take for the welfare of Mohamedans."<sup>475</sup> Anne's honest and balanced worldview gave her the ability to treat people with dignity and respect, and this letter demonstrates that such respect was returned.

After they left Patna, Lady Anne and Wilfrid traveled in the Indian countryside, making an effort to meet native leaders and learn about life under the Raj. Two systems of tax collection existed in the agricultural districts, one called the ryot and one called the zamindar. The former was a more direct system of collection by the government; the latter was indirect through a local zamindar. The Blunts asked people in villages which they preferred and they responded that the zamindar did not pressure them as much as the government officials.<sup>476</sup> The problem was that if the zamindar could not pay the government, then the village would be sold by the government to someone else. Rent had to be paid, with or without rain and crops. The loss of land and revenue for the peasants was devastating and interrupted food production in the countryside. Anne and Wilfrid worked to create a remedy for the obvious injustice and lack of production involved in such a system.

Anne and Wilfrid spent a significant amount of time with the Alfred Lyalls in India. Anne's opinion of the Lyalls was mixed. She found the Lyalls comfortable friends

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<sup>475</sup> LAB journals, add mss 54128, 1 February 1884.

<sup>476</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 13 January 1884. See also, add mss 53954.

with relatively open minds about political issues, but Alfred Lyall disappointed Anne on several occasions by taking a more politically acceptable position toward British policy in India than a courageous one. In conversation, Lyall sometimes did the same, such as when Lyall related to Anne his impression of Sir Salar Jung. Lyall stated that he would not have wished the nizam to have any real power. The conversation struck Anne as unusual, since Lyall often gave an impression of being open to a more liberal approach. Anne observed that their host:

Sir A Lyall is a curious mixture, no doubt we all are but in some the contrary currents driving in various directions shew more plainly than in others and are at such variance with each other that one might almost describe the effect as like ‘straight tempered by crooked’ or wisdom by folly or temerity [?] by mendacity— (the man by the official in short).<sup>477</sup>

*The Pioneer*, an Allahabad newspaper, agreed to print an address by Muslim leaders at Mayo Hall and Wilfrid’s response to it. The paper also agreed to notify Akhbar Hassan, the author of the address, if the paper decided not to print it. When the newspaper was printed, neither the address nor Wilfrid’s response appeared. What did appear was a short, “spiteful” article that suggested:

The Mohammedans of Patna understood as little as Mr. Wilfrid Blunt himself what his mission was there and that they believed widely that he had come as a paid spy of the government to find out their secret thoughts.<sup>478</sup>

Wilfrid took the article to Lyall and argued that since the paper was semi-official and he (Wilfrid) was a guest of Government House, he had a right to complain. Lyall summoned the subeditor and demanded that the article and response be published the next morning.

Anne’s pragmatic view was that:

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<sup>477</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 14 January 1884.

<sup>478</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 14 January 1884.

This is the way in which the press is manipulated by officials—and I have not the least doubt that Sir A Lyall had no objection to the spiteful paragraph although he is so very really kind in all sorts of ways with a kindness partly of friendship and chiefly of paternal official protection and keeping out of mischief.<sup>479</sup>

Anne understood that politicians, bureaucrats, and officials, would protect themselves from political scandal or criticism at nearly any cost, even if it meant compromising a friend. Anne and Wilfrid did not yet realize that government officials found the Blunts' revelations more and more uncomfortable, and the process of discrediting Wilfrid in the press was beginning to emerge with greater intensity.

When Anne and Wilfrid toured India, they saw the long-term effects of policies similar to those they had noticed in Egypt. For both of them, India and Egypt had a strong connection, just as they did within the Empire. For the empire, Egypt and the Suez Canal were part of the route to India; India was the “Jewel in the Crown” and provided troops when rebellions occurred, just as happened in Egypt. The bonds of empire and oppression were inextricable; the Egyptian exiles in Ceylon were the personification of the dual imperial relationship shared by India and Egypt, and Anne and Wilfrid were part of the bond between them.

Following their tour of education, history, and ideas in India, Anne and Wilfrid returned to England. They had visited India with the idea of helping provide more Muslim Indians with a pathway to higher education and career skills. They intended to pursue the Muslim university in Hyderabad while they were in England, but circumstances eventually removed this project from Anne and Wilfrid's agenda. Their return to England quickly launched Wilfrid's first bid for Parliament, and ultimately opened the door to his and Anne's involvement in Ireland and the politics of Home Rule. In a sense, Anne and Wilfrid developed their sense of Home Rule in Egypt and India;

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<sup>479</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53936, 14 January 1884.

their Home Rule ideology was built upon their experience with the Nationalist Party three years before in Egypt. Justice, liberty, honesty in politics, and Home Rule were the basis for Anne's egalitarian form of cosmopolitanism. Her pragmatic, meticulous, mind never wavered from this commitment, regardless of the national, racial, or religious sentiments of the people involved.

## **Chapter Eight: Egyptian Question to Irish Question**

Most people in Ireland who are good for anything have been in jail.<sup>480</sup>

He is a fool but something of a knave too. The Irish are right to trust nobody. But I hope they will go on trusting us.<sup>481</sup>

Egypt and the Arab world occupied the heart and mind of Lady Anne Blunt, especially in the aftermath of the Egyptian revolution and Wilfrid's and her intensely political tour of India. Anne's commitment to justice and to demanding imperial integrity from her home government provided the basis for Anne to transfer her energy and determination from Egyptian nationalism and Indian Muslim higher education to the cause of justice for the Irish and the Home Rule bill. For Lady Anne, a broad worldview included Egypt, Arabia, India, and now Ireland, which were all a part of her effort to encourage an egalitarian adoption of liberty, self-government, and justice. Egypt and Ireland also occupied concurrently the daily agendas of Parliament in the latter 1880's.<sup>482</sup> Lady Anne and Wilfrid's involvement with Egypt and Ireland was complicated and detailed, and the following accounts are exemplary anecdotes from various years of political activity there.

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<sup>480</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 25 October 1887.

<sup>481</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 26 October 1887.

<sup>482</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 14 July 1882. Reports on the progress and debates about the Irish Arrears Bill appear alongside extensive coverage of the aftermath of the destructive bombing of Alexandria by British troops. Ireland and Egypt occupied the business of Parliament on a daily basis, and both questions challenged the basis of what it meant to be British, whether England should be part of a global empire or just an important nation (small England). Also, 5 July 1882, Mr. O'Kelley, First Lord of the Treasury, voiced opposition to the imminent attack by British ships upon the forts of Alexandria. O'Kelley demanded that the Government's Egyptian policy be approved by Parliament before any attacks could take place. Prime Minister Gladston responded by stating that the government had an obligation to "bring the united authority of Europe to bear upon the settlement of these questions."



Anne and Wilfrid's Irish politics ranged from supporting oppressed renters, to encouraging parity for Catholics in a predominantly Protestant-controlled land, to arguing for Irish independence from England; the latter in an effort to forestall an outright revolution or an oppressed imperial possession status for Ireland in the British Empire.<sup>483</sup> Wilfrid stood for Parliament three times as a Home Ruler, twice in England, and once in Ireland. Each race he lost by a small margin, indicating his popularity with voters, in spite of his intense Home Rule and anti-imperialist position. With the struggle for Egyptian liberty fresh in their minds, Anne and Wilfrid could easily merge their political experience with the Egyptian question to the politics of Home Rule and what could be termed the Irish question.

When Anne and Wilfrid returned to England in 1882, a few months before the English bombardment of Alexandria, they likely had no idea that they—actually Wilfrid—would be exiled from Egypt for four years. They had left their newly purchased property, named Sheykh Obeyd, on the outskirts of Cairo, and they left countless friends of all levels of Egyptian society. Anne and Wilfrid stood by their friends in Egypt through telegrams, letters, and financial support for legal defense funds and families of imprisoned revolutionaries. They corresponded with the revolutionaries who were ultimately exiled in Ceylon, and made plans to visit them in their exile homes. In planning their visit to Ceylon, Anne organized their meetings with friends new and old in India, with the object of helping alleviate some of the consequences of empire for the subjects of the Crown's jewel. She also helped keep alive the possibility that Ahmed Arabi, leader of the Egyptian Nationalist Party, would return to Egypt with the blessing

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<sup>483</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *The Land War in Ireland: Being a Personal Narrative of Events* (London: Stephen Swift, 1912), 2. This book is a facsimile, faithful reproduction of a historical work by Bibliolife [no date].

of the British government. As the options for Egypt narrowed, Anne turned her attention to Wilfrid's increased political involvement with his lifelong friend, Randolph Churchill.

While in England, Lady Anne devoted her time to numerous daily correspondences, and she maintained a tradition of entertaining politically minded friends and acquaintances, usually on the grounds of their Sussex estate, Crabbet. Anne and Wilfrid also maintained their social and political relationships in London and attended dinners and meetings at which events of the day were actively discussed. Through these relationships and activities, Anne stayed in touch with current events in England, Egypt, India, and Ireland. She dedicated her energy to encouraging English people to consider the other side—the side of the indigenous populations within imperial territories—of the political stories, and she communicated her support to the victims of imperial oppression.

Political discourse on foreign policy in England in late 1882 and 1883 focused largely on the invasion of Egypt, its causes and its consequences, as well as on the viscerally controversial Home Rule bill for Ireland. Opposing viewpoints on the Egyptian invasion sought to rationalize military behavior or to demonize it. Politicians made their cases for their actions and some found new assignments in less politically charged zones of the empire. Anne and her journals and correspondence became a quiet but steady voice for the truth about Egypt, as she was able to glean from correspondence with British and Egyptian observers in Cairo. Anne's correspondence helped provide the material for Wilfrid's regular articles in the press and for debates in the Houses of Parliament. She and Wilfrid became known as political activists who supported the opposing position to that taken by the British government. At the same time, they were also known as experts on Egypt, its people, and its politics. Anne's worldview placed her in a category of a woman whose ideas were ahead of their time. Because her social position as an aristocrat

was rooted in tradition, Anne straddled two worlds, one current, and one that rested in the future.

Straddling the two worlds of tradition and future placed Lady Anne in the unique position of being invited to social events with a traditional guest list, which placed her in what could be considered an adversarial position. On one occasion, Anne and Wilfrid dined at the Lynlyph Stanleys, where Anne listed several of the guests. Those she noted were Lady Wolseley, wife of Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had led the British invading forces in Egypt, Mr. and Mrs. G.O. Trevelyan, Lord Airlie “lately from India, Luchnow,” Mr. R. Browning, Miss Maude Stanley. Anne commented: “Lady Wolseley very gracious and naively enjoying her position and her social intercourse with royalties and their offshoots...Mr. Browning congratulated me on Ralph’s speech...Lord Airlie talked about India and Arabs. It was altogether very agreeable.”<sup>484</sup> Anne’s brother, Ralph, had just made a successful speech in the House of Lords, confirming the intelligence-gathering basis of the recent and tragic government mission led by Professor Edward Palmer.

Anne and Wilfrid received almost daily letters from Egypt and from the exiles in Ceylon and. By late March, a letter from Mahmud Sami, one of the Egyptian nationalists exiled in Ceylon, expressed despair. The khedive had violated the agreement he had with the exiles to allow the fact of their exile to be their punishment. In an obvious effort to publicly humiliate the exiles, the Khedive had gathered the nationalists’ clothes and other private effects and placed them in a public auction. Anne sympathized with the injustice of the khedive’s behavior and the exiles’ humiliation. She responded to Sami’s letter to

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<sup>484</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53920, 17 March 1883. Ralph’s speech in the House of Lords was in regard to the investigation of the tragic Palmer Expedition in the Sinai Desert, the members of which had been murdered in August of 1882. Ralph had used a reference to his sister’s journals to verify his source of information implicating the intelligence-gathering mission of the expedition.

demonstrate support for the exiles in the face of their ongoing disaster. She knew that they needed all the encouragement it was possible to muster. Anne assumed a position of responsibility for helping the exiles maintain contact with the outside world, while she worked to make their story available to the British public.

Anne's ability to think critically on many levels was illustrated in her journal entry a few days after her letter of consolation to Mahmud Sami. As a committed Catholic for the past few years, Anne attended mass regularly. One Sunday, the priest delved into politics after performing mass. He presented to his congregation a petition addressed to Parliament which called for a bill to bar atheists from being admitted to Parliament. The petition included language that suggested that:

The principles of the Anglican Church, with the queen as head of the church were to be supported for 'the religious principles on which the Constitution is founded to which this country owes its greatness.' Now if there is a religious principle on which the Constitution is founded it certainly is that of the Sovereign being head of the church. I also doubt whether it would be a wise measure to pass an act against 'atheists' as many being now in that class who are so from ignorance and not blameable ignorance—who have never had anything offered to them that they could accept, for I think if that which the Church of England gives was the alternative of 'atheism,' many good and upright minds must choose the latter.<sup>485</sup>

As a Catholic, Anne felt some measure of ambivalence toward the Church of England, but her pragmatic sense of justice and liberty did not find common ground with church doctrine. Anne was incensed by hypocrisy, whether in the church, in government policy, or in a person.

In the aftermath of Lady Anne and Wilfrid's participation with the Egyptian revolutionaries, they considered new ways of influencing British foreign policy. On 23

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<sup>485</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53920, 1 April 1883. Anne went on to write, "Poor Father Nicholas was so much shocked that he said an 'atheist must be a corrupted person.' That depends on how he happened to be in that position."

July 1883, Wilfrid Blunt met with his long-time friend, Randolph Churchill, to discuss the idea of Wilfrid's standing for Parliament. Anne and Wilfrid believed that involvement in government would be a more effective way to influence British policy in Egypt and the empire. Anticipating the broad effects of such a political decision Anne wrote,

Now I don't know what to think of this plan. It would be an advantage that Wilfrid should be in Parliament but I fear the advantage would be purchased too dearly. I think English constituencies are bad and probably Irish are worse. His whole life of political action has been transparently straight and I doubt the possibility of his getting into Parliament without sacrifice of that. I consider that the pledges given by MP's are a sacrifice of their integrity.<sup>486</sup>

In spite of Anne's misgivings, she and Wilfrid decided that his election bid should go forward. With the focus on Wilfrid's election effort, Anne and Wilfrid consolidated their energies for British politics. Once again, what Anne took for granted as justice in Ireland, just as in Egypt, was not a simple issue in Britain. As her forward-thinking, egalitarian cosmopolitan, persona would suggest, Anne saw injustice in the evictions of Irish workers for past-due rents, especially when evictions were based on religious prejudice such as anti-Catholic sentiment. Anti-Catholic sentiment on the part of British officials in Ireland was analogous to the conscious or subconscious anti-Muslim or anti-native sentiment of British officials in Egypt, Arabia, or India. Anne's broad worldview on the issues of race, nationality, religion, and class were decades ahead of her time, but to her, her ideas were a pragmatic view of justice.

As Wilfrid's campaign for a parliamentary seat in 1887 grew in momentum, his visibility as a politician grew as well. His position on Ireland, particularly Home Rule, drew both intense applause and equally intense criticism, from the public and from his

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<sup>486</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53922, 23 July 1883. Ultimately, Wilfrid adopted the Home Ruler position on the Irish question, causing Randolph Churchill political discomfort at the time. Anne's view of the advantage to Wilfrid's being in Parliament would be his ability to influence policy on behalf of Egypt in particular, and on India and Ireland as well.

friends. The process of landlords' collecting rents and evicting defaulters became known as coercion. Coercion was a policy in which the British government attempted to suppress Irish unrest by suspending civil rights or unleashing brutal police action against protesters, such as the deadly conflict known as Bloody Sunday.<sup>487</sup> Coercion was a hotly debated topic in England, with some Britons opposing its harsh treatment of people, Irish or otherwise; others calling for law and order in Great Britain at any cost. Anne and Wilfrid opposed the draconian measures that the Coercion Acts allowed, if not encouraged. Their stance caused some disputes between themselves and some of their friends, such as Wilfrid's cousin, Hugh Wyndham. On one occasion, Anne received Hugh and Percy Wyndham, Wilfrid's cousins, and their families at Crabbet, in anticipation of a meeting at East Grinstead on the topic of Home Rule and coercion. Reflecting on the Home Rule meeting and speeches, Anne observed that Hugh Wyndham "is not the calm impartial diplomat but a very violent coercionist, and there was considerable tension..."<sup>488</sup> Hugh ultimately decided to gather his family and depart from Crabbet and the meeting with which he so deeply disagreed. He cited his "long and affectionate friendship with Wilfrid" as his reason for leaving. Anne politely acknowledged Hugh's right to his opinion and his feelings ("his feelings are of course rubbish") and that he must follow his beliefs.

The Home Rule meeting at East Grinstead included several speakers in addition to Wilfrid. The meeting called for Home Rule, the repeal of coercion measures, and

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<sup>487</sup> LAB journals add mss 53959, 10 October 1887. Coercion Acts were a series of bills debated in Parliament and sometimes passed to manage the unrest and give police greater latitude in their treatment of protesters. On 13 November 1887, clashes between British police and Irish protesters and their supporters resulted in Irish casualties and became known as Bloody Sunday.

<sup>488</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 10 October 1887. Anne noted that Wilfrid did not realize Hugh's intense coercionism until the next morning when Anne told him.

conciliation. Anne described the venue as a “capital meeting room full with 300 and something people.” Wilfrid described the “actual state of Ireland and the Irish,” and an elderly man, Mr. Slack, “brought some cheers by remarking, ‘I should be very happy to see Lord Salisbury undergoing five or even ten years penal servitude for his coercive measures...’”<sup>489</sup> This meeting included proponents of Home Rule, but the reality of British fear of Irish independence and its potential to affect British rule in India could not be ignored, whether or not this fear was valid.<sup>490</sup>

A few days after the East Grinstead meeting, Irish politician and Home Rule supporter John Dillon sent a telegram to Wilfrid, imploring him to travel to Ireland on Friday for a meeting Saturday morning. Anne traveled separately to meet Wilfrid and Dillon in Ireland, and during her trip she shared a car on the train with the “fashionable” Lady Revelstoke, sister-in-law of Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer), about whom Anne commented, “Lady Revelstoke is of forbidding countenance.”<sup>491</sup> Maybe Revelstoke’s forbidding countenance reflected the antithesis of Anne’s cosmopolitan nature; maybe the forbidding nature was a family characteristic. The Baring and Blunt meeting on this train could have been a metaphor for their future relations in Egypt. Lord Cromer became

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<sup>489</sup> LAB journals add mss 53959, 11 October 1887. East Grinstead was a village not far from Crabbet, in Sussex. Lady Anne likely reacted to Lord Salisbury’s famous “Hottentot Speech,” [15 May 1886] in which he declared that Ireland had races, like the Hottentots or the Hindus, which were unable to govern themselves; see Deirdre McMahon, *Ireland and the British Empire*, ed. Kevin Kenny, 187.

<sup>490</sup> Deirdre McMahon, *Ireland and the British Empire*, ed. Kevin Kenny, 188.

<sup>491</sup> LAB journals add mss 53959, 14 October 1887. Reading Anne’s account of her encounter on the train illustrates Anne’s possible insecurity or disdain about fashion. Lady Revelstoke arrived “with the tallest of footmen and the smartest of dressing cases.” She also wrote about Revelstoke’s son, a young Baring and a student at Oxford, who threw a glass at the face of another student during a banquet at the “fashionable undergraduate club.” The injured man lay bleeding on the floor after being hit, while Baring and others danced around him. The row was “so disgraceful that Percy Wyndham and several others withdrew from the club.” Given Anne and Wilfrid’s experiences in Egypt with Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer, Anne’s intuition about Lady Revelstoke might have been influenced by such events.

Consul General at Cairo in 1883, and he ruled Egypt with indisputable authority for nearly three decades. For Anne, Egypt and Ireland shared the fate of imperial oppression.

### **MEETINGS IN IRELAND**

Woodford, Ireland, represented the location of a series of climactic events for Anne as she and Wilfrid pursued justice for the Irish. During their 1887 tour of Irish political organizations and venues, Anne and Wilfrid met the leaders of Irish independence and resistance to coercion and eviction at the hands of landlords, supported by sympathetic British officials. When she arrived in Ireland, Lady Anne immersed herself in the cause of Home Rule and plans for a protest scheduled to take place in Woodford. The protest—a demonstration—was successful and Anne wrote afterwards, “everyone full of joy.” In the aftermath of the successful demonstration, Anne wrote that Wilfrid and William O’Brien, Irish nationalist and member of Parliament, traveled to Limerick and other areas of the county, where they:

Held sham meetings, or rather meetings on purpose to have them dispersed and finished up at Bodyke leaving the police to believe that they intended to hold the Woodford meeting as originally announced on Sunday. But in the evening—about nine o’clock, I believe guided by the PP out of the place by back ways and by [c] paths they walked a couple of miles, found cars waiting and went off to Woodford. Their arrival a signal for illuminations and bonfires, the latter had been prepared on all the hills, the former were candles in the windows and torches held in the hand, partially lighting up the triumphal arches of green in the night.<sup>492</sup>

Anne wrote that the ruse worked because the meetings, once discovered by the Woodford police garrison, took the law enforcement by surprise. The Irish nationalists had cut the telegraph wires, making it impossible for the small Woodford police force of twelve

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<sup>492</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 17 October 1887. William O’Brien was a journalist by trade. He was close to Charles Stewart Parnell, Irish nationalist leader, and it was Parnell who elevated O’Brien to a leadership position and editor of the Land League newspaper, *United Ireland*. Philip Bull, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.osforddnb.com/proxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/35281, accessed 18 Aug 2010]



officers to summon help. The reinforcements were scheduled to arrive in time for what they thought was the meeting scheduled on the following day, which was Sunday.<sup>493</sup>

An estimated 4,000 people attended the meeting at Woodford that night. O'Brien called for an end to it at three o'clock in the morning by telling the crowd that it was time for decent people to be in bed. The members of Parliament and other guests were housed locally, their movements watched by the local police. On the morning after the meeting, Sunday, the reinforcements of police arrived as scheduled, expecting crowds of Home Rule supporters to gather in anticipation of the scheduled meeting. The police discovered "from those of their own species on the spot that all was over." They were powerless to deflect the ridicule that their predicament aroused in the public. "They looked so foolish that they found nothing better to do than to send an express to stop the military from coming to share in their own ridiculous performance." Anne enjoyed the small victory of the Irish nationalists, just as she would have enjoyed such a victory of Egyptian nationalists.

Anne did not revel in the small victory for long. She knew that if the police and military had managed to catch the Woodford meeting, there would have been violence. She wrote:

The whole thing became an absurdity, the government of Lord Salisbury from himself downward through Balfour, Ridgeway, to the district inspectors and to the lowest policemen must be the laughingstock wherever the news marches and that will be all over the world.

But one must not forget in laughing at this thing, that it is not the fault of the authorities that there was a vast meeting assembled and dispersed peaceably—they had every intention of bloodshed and were prepared with loaded rifles to

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<sup>493</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 17 October 1887.

shoot down every man of the 4,000 that they could who should resist their order to move.

Anne expressed dismay at the poor account of the Woodford meeting published in the *St. James's Gazette* and in the *Freeman's Journal*. She believed, as she had about the Egyptian Question, that if honest Englishmen knew of the folly of their government in Ireland, they would not tolerate it. She also wrote of Arthur Balfour that while he did not mind being attacked or referred to as “Bloody Balfour,” a term he actually appreciated, he did not like suffering ridicule. Anne believed that even if Balfour were able to imprison the nationalist leaders, the “glare of public opinion in England will not let him do as has been done hitherto—I don’t believe that honest Englishmen would remain quietly looking on if—say Mr. O’Brien should be sentenced.”<sup>494</sup>

Anne respected the ability of the Irish nationalists to maintain a cohesive force and she was amazed at their discipline in maintaining secrecy. She knew that such unity was the key to any success the Irish would have against the formidable British government.

People who in thousands can keep a secret like this of a great public meeting so as to defeat the armies of informers and detectives on the watch to catch even a stray word may surely be capable of managing some party at least of their own administration. For over 5,000 must have known all the details of organization beforehand.

I did not know till the other day that there exists a regular school—an establishment for “informers.” It is near Dublin.<sup>495</sup>

With her personal commitment to encouraging justice and liberty, the role of “informer” was anathema to Anne.

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<sup>494</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 17 October 1887.

<sup>495</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 17 October 1887. Emphasis is Anne’s.

Anne learned that members of Parliament, like other nationalists, had suffered ill treatment with the use of iron cages while they languished untried in the Kilmainham jail. She believed the English public would grasp the injustice of such violations of judicial law.<sup>496</sup> With such treatment occurring regularly, William O'Brien made an effort to support his Irish colleagues, in part by appearing in court when they testified before English justices. Anne and Wilfrid joined him in Wexford for the trial of Edward Walsh, editor of "The People" and the *New Ross Standard*. In anticipation of their departure for the court, Anne wrote, "So we go—and shall perhaps have some fun at "suppressed" meetings—writing letters to England urging English people to come over and see for themselves what is going on..."<sup>497</sup> Anne's cosmopolitan persona believed that Englishmen needed only to have the facts before them to conclude that they must pressure their government to support justice and freedom, in Ireland just as in Egypt a few years earlier.

Anne employed her characteristically detailed observations to describe the magistrate who presided over Walsh's trial.

The principal one—at all events the one who spoke—was a Mr. McCleod from Bray, salary about £500 per year removable at pleasure of the Castle. A large, portly figure with a purple red face ornamented with a very large and fiercely curved red moustaches, small conical head, bald but for a tuft of red hair on each side, an eye glass, a dark blue coat with pocket handkerchief same colour as face, stuck in breast pocket. He was speaking in loud and rather angry tones as he entered and I think our presence made a disagreeable impression on him while he

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<sup>496</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959 18 October 1887. Anne's writings reveal her arguably naïve belief in the English sense of justice.

<sup>497</sup> LAB journals, add mss add 53959 18 October 1887. Anne and Wilfrid dined with their Irish friends and sympathizers. The guest included the Dillons and the Redmonds, and after dinner, Dillon read passages from Lord Byron's poem, "The Irish Avatar." Anne commented that the poem was "extremely fine," and that while she had read everything she could find of her grandfather's, but until she heard this poem read aloud, she had forgotten it.

was addressing the public who had crowded into the back of the court and who seemed to me to be perfectly quiet...<sup>498</sup>

Anne was quick to notice people in positions of power who appeared to use that power to intimidate, rather than for some positive purpose. The magistrate appeared to Anne to be one of the former who found the presence of politically active, aristocratic, British guests in the courtroom a nuisance.

When Anne and Wilfrid traveled to Woodford, their arrival prompted requests from local leaders to create a meeting in support of beleaguered tenants of local estates. One of the well-known cases was the Clanricarde Estate, whose tenants had been fighting evictions for several years.<sup>499</sup> The Blunts traveled the area to see evicted tenants “looking mournfully at their destroyed homes.” They saw neighbors working on a barn so that it could house evicted families. Anne and Wilfrid committed themselves to raise the awareness of fellow Englishmen to such injustice and to use their influence to try to persuade British authorities to mitigate the effects of eviction and coercion.

Anne’s commitment to exposing injustice in Ireland expressed itself dramatically in her journal entries during the time she and Wilfrid were there working with the nationalists.

The first news that the meeting is proclaimed! We all thought it would have been almost impossible to hope for such folly on the part of the government. However so it was—and a proclamation signed Arthur James Balfour was stuck up close to the bridge. [Wilfrid and I] went to it and Wilfrid peeled it off as it was quite fresh and not yet stuck fast...brought it home.<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> LAB journals, ad mss 53959, 19 October 1887.

<sup>499</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 21 October 1887.

<sup>500</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 23 October 1887. The term, proclaimed, in this case, indicates that the British had declared the meeting prohibited, or illegal. In their effort to control the ability of the Irish to organize, the planning and execution of such meetings became a game of cat-and-mouse for the Irish. Anne was obviously cheering for the Irish “mouse” against the British “cat.”

Anne and Wilfrid knew Balfour personally, and their confrontation here was almost an omen of future trouble. Balfour would consign Wilfrid to jail a few months later.

Anne and Wilfrid and their colleagues held a “council” and decided they must have the meeting as a protest “against the false and perjured sworn information quoted in the proclamation.” Wilfrid notified the commanding officer, explaining the cause and object of the meeting, and “that he as chairman would proceed to the platform at the hour appointed.” This letter, approved by Mr. Rowlands, Member of Parliament, Mr. Maen Wright, and Mr. Fagan was delivered to the authorities.<sup>501</sup> A short time later, Anne noted that there was a cry that police were “cleaning the streets” as people were leaving mass. Priests and bystanders begged police to cease their belligerent tactics. The police commander informed Wilfrid that it was his job to prevent the meeting and to uphold the proclamation. Wilfrid answered that as chairman of the meeting, he was obliged to continue with it as planned.

Anne and Wilfrid and the organizers of the meeting made their way toward the field and platform where the meeting was scheduled to happen. Approximately fifty police, in a phalanx across the field, maintained their positions until the group was on the platform and Wilfrid had begun to speak, at which time they charged. The district magistrate, more violent than the police, rushed Wilfrid to knock him off of the platform. Anne threw herself in between the two men and held fast onto Wilfrid. Describing the frightening, dramatic scene, Anne’s words describe it best:

I saw they meant business and that he [Wilfrid] would be seriously hurt unless I kept hold and this I managed to do in spite of the violent efforts to tear me away. We fell from the platform to the grass, rolled over I hardly know how and scrambled up again to the platform only to be hurled off again somewhat more violently.

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<sup>501</sup> LAB journals add mss 53959, 23 October 1887.

It seemed to me that this man Byrne [the district magistrate] had a special animus in attacking Wilfrid and me too for that matter, for at one moment I was almost garotted by the hands of a person who seized me round the neck from behind and dug his fingers into my throat. I felt myself choking when suddenly the grip was taken off so that I came to. I did not know then whether it ceased owing to someone else pulling the man off or whether he had let go not to be pitched off the platform with us. There was Byrne shouting, "Take her off, take her off!" meaning to get me away from Wilfrid but, thanks be to God, I was able to hold firm and down we went together.<sup>502</sup>

Anne was later the subject of a controversy in *The Times*, in which Mr. Byrne denied having had his hands on her throat, or having pushed her and Wilfrid off of the platform.<sup>503</sup> Anne sketched a picture of the scene in her journal, depicting the dramatic nature of the encounter. Anne reflected on more of the violence of their encounter with the police and magistrate in Woodford:

[Gap in journal, resumed a few days later] While we lay on the ground, one of the constables was twisting Wilfrid's right arm round and round till he said that torture having been abolished the policeman 'might as well let his arm alone.' ... When the police all stood over us with batons brandishing and while the one mentioned had hold of Wilfrid's arm, Anne shouted, 'I call God to witness you will kill him...if you go on!'<sup>504</sup>

Anne credited Wilfrid's greatcoat as one of the real assets to keeping him from suffering more injury than he did. She remarked that Wilfrid did not resist throughout this ordeal; it was the police attacking him and trying to separate Anne from him that caused their falls from the platform to the ground. While they were on the ground, remaining passive, Wilfrid asked the police if they were going to go ahead and arrest him. Finally, one of the officers arrested Wilfrid and he and Anne walked with him to the guardhouse. As they walked to the guardhouse, the police batoned people as they began to form a crowd, even

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<sup>502</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53959, 25 October 1887.

<sup>503</sup> J. Byrne, Magistrate, "Mr. Byrne and Lady Anne Blunt," *The Times*, 7 November 1887, p. 13, col. E.

<sup>504</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 25 October 1887.

though they were quiet.<sup>505</sup> Anne's experience with the British officials in Woodford served to solidify her resolve to inform the British public of the behavior of their government officials in Ireland. This experience also made her a more committed campaigner for Wilfrid's Parliament bid.

Anne had watched many eviction cases in the courtroom before Wilfrid's arrest and trial. She was familiar with a number of the attorneys and judges due to her experience in the courthouse. When O'Brien appeared in the courtroom, the magistrate and Crown Counsel, taken by surprise, behaved less truculently than they had in previous days. After attending hearings in court, Anne joined other nationalists for speeches and to receive messages of appreciation for Wilfrid's and her efforts to defend "the right of public meeting."<sup>506</sup>

The next day, Anne noted that the "police are watching us" as she made her way to the courthouse for Wilfrid's hearing. With five minutes to spare, Anne asked for and received five minutes from the court to meet with Wilfrid's counsel. She wrote that:

It would be monstrous if counsel not given time to hear his client's story. But if they treat us with the greatest possible discourtesy—pushing their legal rights for the Crown as far as possible, what do they not do to the poor prisoners who are not English?"<sup>507</sup>

Timothy Charles Harrington, Wilfrid's counsel, spent time with Anne before Wilfrid's hearing, proclaiming his support for Home Rule, Wilfrid, and the Irish cause. Harrington had been in jail and jokingly declared that his experience qualified him to defend

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<sup>505</sup> LAB journals, add ms 53959, 25 October 1887.

<sup>506</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 24 October 1887. Anne wrote that notes came from "various radical and liberal associations and from branches of the League—Mr. Dillon, Mrs. Henry, Mr. O'Sullivan, Mrs. Dillon, Mrs. Rae, Miss Cobden, A. Pollen, from a number of Oxford men, Kidderminster, L. Women's Lit Federation, etc., etc."

<sup>507</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 25 October 1887.

prisoners and to notify them of the conditions they were about to experience. Anne noted that, “Most people in Ireland who are good for anything have been in jail.”<sup>508</sup>

With consistent determination, Anne sat through all of the court proceedings that led to Wilfrid’s case and others concerning evictions and protests. Watching Harrington cross-examine witnesses, Anne remarked that Harrington’s efforts were

Admirable but for the circumstances which make one long to get this thing over and be doing something else would be a very great amusement. The court is however a wretchedly uncomfortable place, grimy, cobwebby, a flea or two—broken window panes and stuffed with rag or bits of paper. Took notes of evidence which I think their seeing me do made them uncomfortable. They have got a superior Crown Counsel—‘superior’ does not mean of character for he is a very low sort of fellow.<sup>509</sup>

When testimony began in the court, Anne wrote of the intense disappointment she experienced when one of the witnesses, Reverend H. Fagan, who had been with the Blunts through much of their ordeal,

turned or was turned into a hostile witness—not saying what he had previously said of how he had seen the police batoning the people which he had talked of so much before...doing everything to butter up police and authorities. This after minimizing their rough treatment of himself. Afterwards he came back into court to make a speech in which he declared that by saying the police had behaved admirably he spoke ironically and that he was a Home Ruler...of course he knew that this would not be reported and his deposition will—to the Graflin of whose toryism he stands in terror.<sup>510</sup>

Reverend Fagan had been shaking hands with officials, sharing lozenges with the Crown Counsel during the proceedings, and declared that the police had behaved with “calmness.” His account of when Anne and Wilfrid were on the ground with the police

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<sup>508</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 25 October 1887.

<sup>509</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 25 October 1887.

<sup>510</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 26 October 1887. This was probably Reverend Howard Fagan, but could have been Henry Fagan. The journals do not list his first name, so determining Fagan’s précised identity is elusive.



standing over them was that such “would not have happened without violence,” insinuating that the violence began with Anne and Wilfrid. Anne wrote about Fagan, “He is a fool but something of a knave too. The Irish are right to trust nobody. But I hope they will go on trusting us.”<sup>511</sup>

Harrington issued a summons for Arthur James Balfour in an effort to inquire about the possibility “that at the time of the proclamation any sworn information could have reached him by telegram. This enraged the Crown Counsel as an attempt to inquire into State secrets—he puffed with fury.” The court responded by refusing Harrington’s request for a delay, with all parties acknowledging that the latter had a criminal case appearing at the same time. The result of the court’s intransigence was, in Anne’s words, “This looks like a determined attempt to prevent in all ways in their power the accused having proper legal advice—it is the most scandalous travesty of justice.”<sup>512</sup> Anne sent a message home to publish in the *Times*:

Case still going on. Wilfrid has been sentenced without appeal. I have been in Court the whole time and protest strongly against the unfairness shewn by magistrates—in England such proceedings would be impossible. It is a great pity that Sir Charles Russell has not come over to watch these proceedings. Harrington only arrived ten minutes before Court opened. Every possible obstacle placed in the way of defence. Publish this in *Times*. Lady Anne Blunt. Woodford.<sup>513</sup>

Justice continued to define Anne’s view of world events and human interaction. She saw no reason to inhibit the natural consequences of just behavior and likewise resisted attempts to manipulate results, whether on a local scale such as Woodford, or on a national scale.

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<sup>511</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 26 October 1887.

<sup>512</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 26 October 1887.

<sup>513</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53959, 28 October 1887. Prior to their involvement in Ireland, Anne and Wilfrid were content to keep Anne’s political activities confined to her personal journals and correspondence. The submission of this letter for publication might have been Anne’s first foray into public political activity.

## BACK IN ENGLAND

Two months after Anne wrote about their Irish Home Rule activities and Wilfrid's incarceration, she was in England and maintaining her constant political activities. With Wilfrid making a bid for a seat in Parliament, for the area of Deptford, Anne canvassed potential voters on Wilfrid's behalf. She took her friend, Mrs. Hicks, with her. Mrs. Hicks was Anne's ally "in that formidable quarter of the fashionable world of Deptford." Her notes provide detailed accounts of the families she visited on her routes. She made note of their nationality, the political sentiments of the husband and wife, as well as those of their children, and she noted the professions of the people in the household. In the case of one family, the Crombies, she wrote that they were Scotch, that the husband was in business, and that one of the sons was a professor of mathematics at one of the colleges in spite of his being "deaf and dumb." She described the daughters as musical and non-political. Finally, she summed up the family by writing that Mr. Crombie was a "warm supporter" who was looking for rooms for Anne to use on her visits to Deptford when campaigning.<sup>514</sup> Anne appreciated the Crombies' generous spirit and the accomplishments of their family, in spite of difficulties. She especially appreciated their open minds and hearts in regard to Wilfrid's campaign and the question of Home Rule.

Anne showed her broad sense of justice when she wrote about the unemployment situation in Deptford at the time of Wilfrid's campaign there. Anne and Mrs. Hicks' husband, Mr. Hicks, heard a statement from a Mr. Elliott (whom Mr. Hicks believed was a socialist) regarding the grim circumstances of over 7,000 people in the area who were on the brink of starvation. Anne wrote that the government would need to step in to

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<sup>514</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 19 December 1887. This entry is part of a list of eleven visits made on this day, with detailed notes of each one; whether or not people were home, their religion, whether or not they supported Wilfrid, and so forth. One of the visits included the home of a Presbyterian minister, Mr. and Mrs. Morley Wright, who planned to vote for Wilfrid but could not support him publicly.

alleviate such poverty and hunger because a situation of such magnitude was beyond the scope of private enterprise. Anne advocated Mr. Hicks' effort to visit the unemployment registry office to verify the numbers before considering the speaker's information as fact.<sup>515</sup> Anne's suggestion for government intervention was unusual for her time; such an idea would be more acceptable at least a half century later.

After a full day of campaigning around Deptford, Anne returned to Crabbet and wrote that *The Times* published a "splendid letter from Mr. Lefevre" about Wilfrid and his political position for Home Rule.<sup>516</sup> The next day, the substance of the brewing argument in *The Times* gained another notable voice when Lord Salisbury wrote: "India will be lost if Home Rule is given to Ireland," and also "that Home Rulers are ill and connected with 'murderers.'" Anne wrote that these are the "plums of his speech."<sup>517</sup> As a liberal in the context of her time and as a cosmopolitan with an egalitarian worldview, Anne could not understand denying liberty to any of Britain's colonies. Lord Salisbury represented a cosmopolitan view, but his was more imperial and elitist in its scope; it was also defined by the fear of Indian, and now Egyptian, insurrection. Lady Anne's egalitarian, cosmopolitan view also connected the Egyptian nationalists with the Muslim and Hindu leaders of India, the Anazeh sheikhs of Arabia, and the Home Rulers in Ireland. Liberty for the colonies would benefit Britain by eliminating the colonies' native populations' need to revolt.

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<sup>515</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 22 December 1887.

<sup>516</sup> LAB journals add mss 53961, 19 December 1887. Mr. Lefevre refers to George John Shaw Lefevre, a liberal politician of the day, who supported Irish Home Rule. Allen Warren, "Lefevre, George John Shaw-, Baron Eversley (1831–1928)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). This entry has no further explanation on this day, but the discussion continues on the following day with article containing Lord Salisbury's comments regarding Home Rule.

<sup>517</sup> LAB journals add mss 53961, 20 December 1887.

Anne hosted a seemingly endless stream of political personages, along with horse connoisseurs who came to view the famous Crabbet Stud. One of the campaign advisers, Mr. C.D. Andrews, fellow supporter Mr. Hicks, and Anne discussed political strategy. Later the same day, Anne, accompanied by two of her friends, attended the ladies' meeting to discuss a proposed Deptford Ladies' committee in the New Cross room of the Reform Club. Anne wrote that several of the women who attended "are energetic workers at canvassing..."<sup>518</sup> Among the ladies who attended the meeting, Anne mentioned Miss Jane Cobden, Mrs. William Morris, then gentlemen, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Hope, and Mr. Tibbett. Wilfrid addressed the group, followed by Jane Cobden and three of the men. After the meeting, Jane Cobden promised Anne that she would come "down" and give her lecture on Ireland.<sup>519</sup> Anne showed clearly her interest in hosting her fellow countrymen and women, who were politically astute and who had meaningful, informed, thoughts to share. Anne left this meeting and made five campaign calls in the company of Miss Andrews and Miss Randall, which made the campaign trail "quite cheerful—at least as cheerful as such calls can be."<sup>520</sup>

Keeping a cheerful attitude during political calls must have been a challenge for Anne and her companions when they encountered opponents of Home Rule on their route. In one case, Anne called on Mr. and Mrs. Prestige. She described their house as very large, their cards received by a servant and their reception by Mr. Prestige. Anne's

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<sup>518</sup> LAB journals add mss 53961, 20 December 1887.

<sup>519</sup> LAB journals add mss 53961, 20 December 1887. Anne does not specify whether she meant for Jane Cobden to make her speech to a gathering at Crabbet, or to a group in Deptford, or in London. Jane Cobden, later Unwin, actively supported many liberal causes such as Irish Home Rule and woman suffrage. A. C. Howe, "Unwin, (Emma) Jane Catherine Cobden (1851–1947)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>520</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 20 December 1887.

description of Mr. Prestige: “a short thick reddish haired square-faced person who spoke in jerks,

I shall be very much against you. I must tell you that I am so screwed up in myself that if I were in Ireland I would kick all the Irish out of it—I’m for law and order—I like to have my rents paid. (N.B. he is said to have no rents anywhere much less property in Ireland)<sup>521</sup> [Emphasis Anne’s]

Anne’s pragmatism converged with her sense of justice in quoting Prestige but showing the lack of foundation for his argument. For Anne, Prestige represented a cross-section of the British public who opposed justice for Ireland without considering the Irish point of view.

Anne’s notes detail numerous homes that she visited on the campaign trail, from Baptist families listed as liberal and supportive, to an ironmonger’s family who was liberal but unionist, to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bovington, who supported liberal programs and favored a liberal ladies’ association. Another family of bakers seemed unfavorable on the subject of Ireland, but requested information from Anne. She wrote that the daughters were particularly nice. The family’s willingness to listen caused Anne to write, “If people in England knew what I told them, they would sympathise.” Anne believed strongly in justice for Ireland and she never gave up believing that most of her English neighbors would understand the Irish question if they had more good information.<sup>522</sup>

The Irish question provoked visceral responses in the people Anne canvassed. In one family, Anne wrote that, “They were civil to us, but very hostile...” She wrote that Mr. Hobgen, the husband, stated, “Mr. Evelyn turned ‘because he was afraid his Irish tenants would boycott him, and he [Mr. Hobgen] knew all about that.’” Anne noted that

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<sup>521</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 20 December 1887. Underlines are Anne’s.

<sup>522</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 21 December 1887.

this man also did not actually own any Irish property. Anne was willing to hear differing opinions, but she placed emphasis on the credibility of the source.<sup>523</sup> Once again, Anne required facts to support arguments in the face of justice.

Anne's ability to maintain consistent campaign activity, manage her home, and host a nearly endless stream of people at Crabbet, was a feat of energy, fortitude, and grace. Her detailed journal entries have intermittent entries that reveal her distress about Wilfrid and his absences. She wrote, "Wilfrid to London with Mr. Chapman at ten. How long will he be away, and where? I wish I knew. But it is in God's hand so why be troubled. Alas how weak one is and confused of mind."<sup>524</sup>

Anne's journal continues with the campaign work that occupied the rest of her day. She and Wilfrid met later in Deptford, to her surprise, then went on to a meeting in which Wilfrid spoke to potential voters. Anne noted that he answered a few questions, some of which were posed by "extreme radicals," who, in spite of their radical views, seemed satisfied with his answers.<sup>525</sup> The importance of Wilfrid's candidacy is evident in that he carried the support of moderates in the British Home Rule contingency, but could also satisfy more radical activists. Wilfrid, in fact, embodied a conduit between radical and conservative blocks and represented the elusive potential for rapprochement between Ireland and Britain.

British sentiment about Ireland was rarely unemotional on either end of the political spectrum. When Anne and her friend, Minnie, visited Sir Andrew Clark, a prominent physician and one of Wilfrid's supporters, he warned them about the "very nasty feeling" on the part of government people, in regard to Wilfrid's politics. Anne

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<sup>523</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 21 December 1887.

<sup>524</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 22 December 1887.

<sup>525</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 27 December 1887.

believed Clark's warning, especially after he told her of a "great lady" who "told him if he did his duty he would poison Mr. Gladstone instead of keeping him alive." Clark said that Gladstone kept well by observing the maxim "Shem ease."<sup>526</sup>

Anne was not superhuman and the campaign trail took its toll on her. When the Charles Russells and the campaign committee discussed the need of written authority in order to accomplish anything in Deptford, Anne responded in her journal, "I wish Deptford was given up..."<sup>527</sup> Deptford was not given up, and Anne made plans to go on to Dublin.

### **POLITICAL DENOUEMENT**

When Anne finally returned home after Wilfrid's incarceration in Ireland and all of the Home Rule political activity, she wrote of feeling total exhaustion. She was unable to write in her journal for several weeks, and dreaded having to revive her habit of daily writing. It is likely that she was describing some form of depression from the failure of her efforts for Wilfrid's elections,<sup>528</sup> Egyptian liberty, Indian liberty and education, and now Irish Home Rule. She suffered from a pragmatic realization that her government was not interested in liberty and justice; and from the government's largely successful effort to silence Wilfrid. With their exile from Egypt, Wilfrid's nearly fatal experience in the Galway and Kilmainham jails, and the close defeat in two elections, Anne was utterly exhausted and devastated, maybe even disillusioned

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<sup>526</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 29 December 1887. Shem ease is difficult to define, but presumably relates to Shem, son of Noah. Sir Andrew Clark was a prominent physician and friend of Gladstone. H. C. G. Matthew, "Clark, Sir Andrew, first baronet (1826–1893)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>527</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53961, 30 December 1887.

<sup>528</sup> Wilfrid stood for election as a Tory in Camberwell, 1884; as a Liberal against Joseph Chamberlain in W. Birmingham, 1885; and as Home Ruler for Deptford, 1887. He served his jail sentence in Galway for two months in 1888, during which time Balfour denied him his coat and blanket until intercession by Lady Gregory on Blunt's behalf. Wilfrid wrote his most celebrated poem, "In Vinculis," after this experience.

and depressed. She was never so downtrodden after thousands of miles and hundreds of nights in the desert, which most people would have considered a time of deprivation and exhaustion. Anne could understand and enjoy the desert and its rational, natural, harsh environment; the unpredictability of people and their duplicity caused Anne far more anguish than any hunger, extreme temperature, or physical danger. In the aftermath of Ireland, with its close connection to Anne's heart and soul, Egypt, Anne had lost faith in her countrymen and missed the clarity of desert life.

With its harsh political realities and heartfelt disappointments, Ireland was the political denouement for Anne and Wilfrid's political activities. Wilfrid's election bids resulted in narrow defeats, indicating the significant amount of support he had in his districts. Anne actively pursued his elections with superhuman effort and believed that at least one of his defeats occurred in a questionable handling of the election itself.<sup>529</sup> The long-term consequence of Anne's involvement in Ireland was the confirmation of her broad-based worldview and cosmopolitan character, tempered with the pragmatic realization of the intransigence of the British government. With Ireland, Anne's political activity covered the cornerstones of the British Empire, Egypt, India, and Ireland, even though Egypt was an informal colony of the empire until several decades later. Because of the prevailing culture at the time of Anne's involvement, her activity was largely unrecognized, leaving Wilfrid's participation in controversial events to accept the burden of opprobrium from their contemporaries who disagreed politically with Anne and Wilfrid's platforms. Anne was committed to liberty and to those who fought for it. Hers was a comparatively quiet war against injustice.

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<sup>529</sup> *New York Times*, 1 March 1888. London, Feb. 29.--Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, the candidate of the Liberal Party, was defeated in the Parliamentary election at Deptford to-day. The vote was: Mr. Darling, (Conservative,) 4,345; Mr. Blunt, 4,070.



Lady Anne and Wilfrid did not succeed during their time in their efforts to help Ireland achieve Home Rule, just as they did not ultimately succeed in Egypt. In the process of working toward that goal and toward Wilfrid's bids for Parliament, Anne and Wilfrid helped the Irish cause in the press and in their social and political circles of friends and acquaintances. They were not able to counteract the policy of domination promoted by such political leaders as the Marquis of Salisbury. Salisbury, member of the House of Lords who served in many government capacities, succeeded Gladstone as prime minister. Salisbury stated that "Ireland was not a nation, because it contained two different, deeply divided races." Salisbury continued with the comments that "It depended on the habits of a people whether self-government should be conferred upon them. The habits of the Irish were very bad."<sup>530</sup> Salisbury's opposition to Irish self-government was almost identical to the government arguments against Egyptian self-government.

#### **DENOUEMENT AND RETURN TO EGYPT**

Once Anne and Wilfrid passed the vague deadline of his exile from Egypt, Anne returned first, then both Anne and Wilfrid, in late 1886. The aftermath of the revolution for them in Egypt was a dramatic difference in the way that Egyptians responded to them. Egyptians knew that association with Anne and Wilfrid was dangerous for them and could land them in jail or at least in a police station for questioning. There were spies for the British administration who would report any appearance of seditious activity, and Anne and Wilfrid certainly qualified as potentially seditious people. Anne and Wilfrid

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<sup>530</sup> *The Times*, 15 May 1886. This article was a review of an anti-Home Rule meeting, at which Salisbury was the speaker. This was also the occasion of Salisbury's famous "Hottentot" speech.

also knew who among the Egyptians had remained loyal to Arabi, who had betrayed him, and who had simply looked out for their own interests.

When Anne and Wilfrid joined an Ayaydah sheykh for a meal in the desert outside Cairo, Anne described the guests as some Howeytis (a predominant tribe of the Sinai), other guests, and “the usual European, probably a money lender, was there too—looking like a...wolf among sheep I suppose.”<sup>531</sup> Evidence of overwhelming European and British influence appeared in many ways in the years after the revolution. When Anne and Wilfrid traveled toward the train station in Cairo, they passed their old friend, Prince Osman, who was in an open cab. Anne wrote, “P. O. cautiously looked round and raised his tarboosh to me.” After that, Osman sent a message to Anne and Wilfrid that he would like to visit them at their garden. “Evidently P.O. is afraid though wishing to see us.” When Osman did not visit for some time after that, Anne wrote, “Not that I expected him; on the contrary I am surprised that others are not more afraid like him.” Anne’s comment reflected the effective control exercised by the Cromer administration as the proconsul maintained order and balanced Egypt’s treasury to Britain’s advantage.<sup>532</sup>

At a lecture in Cairo in 1886, Anne displayed her continued political sympathy when she wrote, “There were various notabilities at the lecture. Nubar [Pasha] passed close to us but we do not claim acquaintance.”<sup>533</sup> Anne’s underline reflects her intense

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<sup>531</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53957, 5 February 1886.

<sup>532</sup> Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer*. Owen provides detailed analysis of Cromer’s fiscal responsibility in Egypt. Cromer’s priority was making Egypt solvent in paying its debts to foreign bondholders and becoming fiscally efficient. He achieved his goal, but governed with what Anne and Wilfrid viewed as autocratic control.

<sup>533</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53957, 26 February 1886. Nubar Pasha, a member of Egypt’s Coptic community, had positioned himself as a leader and liaison between the British government and the Egyptian khedive. Lady Anne viewed his actions as disingenuous and self-serving. The lecture mentioned by Lady Anne was given by Dr. Wilhelm Junker and the subject was his travels in Africa. The region he discusses was Lado, which was divided by Britain and Belgium, and today comprises portions of Congo/Zaire, Uganda, and Sudan.

feeling of betrayal and mistrust toward Nubar Pasha, who had been a prominent figure in the aftermath of Arabi's revolution. Nubar had proven to be a more malleable prime minister and government servant for British interests than for the Egyptian Nationalists. Anne viewed Nubar as a representative of the British government's oppression and duplicity, and one who endorsed the spies that plagued Anne and Wilfrid's every move.

The lecture itself was an account of Dr. Wilhelm Junker's travels and experiences in Lado, where he communicated with Amin Bey, who held a garrison in Lado, in an effort to maintain the region's independence from Britain and Belgium. Amin Bey was "the object of Stanley's expedition. Junker's discourse was colourless politically except hoping that Amin would be rescued—he spoke chiefly about the country, the people, mode of dress, his own illnesses and difficulty of getting away—he escaped at last in Zanzibar last December."<sup>534</sup> Anne was not easily impressed by simple travel stories and she hoped for a discussion of imperial politics and the need for independence among native people in Africa.

Part of the period of political denouement was the gradual restoration of normal social relationships for Lady Anne and Wilfrid, both in England and in Egypt. Anne maintained her political sympathies and contact with the Egyptian nationalists in Ceylon, as well as the few who remained in Cairo. She also maintained her study of Arabic and concentrated on improving the viability of her studs in Sussex and in Cairo. In the midst of maintaining a modicum of her political activity, Anne welcomed the opportunity to participate in social events if they had a political component to them. She was never interested in idle conversation. In 1886, Lady Anne was elected the first president of the

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<sup>534</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53957, 26 February 1886. Amin Bey was the grandfather of twentieth century Ugandan leader, Idi Amin.

Liberal Women's Association, a fledgling organization that sought to advance the opportunities available to women. Anne made a speech one day, and Wilfrid spoke to the members the following day.<sup>535</sup>

Anne's ability to perceive historical events as they happened was consistent. Two years after the Deptford effort, Anne found herself and Wilfrid included in social events with politically prominent people. She understood political power and influence and recognized it in the gathering of people invited for dinner by the Charles Russells in 1889. Anne and Wilfrid's invitation declared as the purpose for the dinner, "To meet Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone." Anne noted in her journal that "This is a remarkable and historical dinner party. Such an assemblage of guests could not have taken place a year ago and to have arranged it was a stroke of genius."<sup>536</sup> Anne mentioned the guests who had arrived just before the Blunts: Mr. and Mrs. F [Frederic] Harrison, Mr. and Lady Constance S. Lefore, Mr. Arthur Russell, Miss Mulholland, and Lord Randolph Churchill. Anne noted that soon after she and Wilfrid arrived, the hosts announced Mr. Parnell's arrival, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone. Lord and Lady Aberdeen were the last guests Anne mentioned before they were called to dinner. As various men offered their arms to the ladies to escort them to dinner, Anne wrote that "I was immensely surprised but not at all sorry to find Mr. Gladstone offering me his arm." Anne told Mr. Gladstone that she "felt considerable alarm at the prominent position and honour that fell to my lot—which I hope reassured him for I cannot help thinking he always feared my trying to get some political remarks out of him and that he wished to avoid talking to me—I therefore avoided politics."<sup>537</sup> Anne, always the pragmatist, knew that a political discussion with

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<sup>535</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53956, 24 October 1886.

<sup>536</sup> LAB journals add mss 53972, 28 May 1889.

<sup>537</sup> LAB journals add mss 53972, 28 May 1889.

Gladstone, at this point in time, would achieve nothing for the Nationalists of Egypt or Ireland, or for Wilfrid. She understood that the logical course for the evening's conversation would be apolitical, which would hopefully restore both political and social trust between herself, Wilfrid, and the Gladstones.

After the political and social restoration dinner at the Charles Russells, Anne was able to find a measure of political peace in her life. She turned her daily attention to the horses and to Judith, although she always maintained contact with the Egyptians who had worked so hard to extract their nation from the clutches of empire. Pragmatic as she was, Anne knew that the time for revolution had passed, and she hoped to be able to maintain her farm in Cairo without interference from government officials. Judith would write of this period of time as one in which her father coerced her mother into working with him to achieve what she believed were fantasy bids for Parliament. Clearly, Wilfrid's bids were serious, and Lady Anne's support was sincere and her efforts earnest. Lady Anne and Wilfrid were ahead of their time in Ireland, by nearly a century, just as they had been in Egypt.

## Conclusion

Lady Anne Blunt succeeded in her quest to pursue useful purposes in life, was ladylike, and not a “silly minikin.” In addition to developing her personal talents in the fine arts and foreign languages, Lady Anne helped influence the political language for Egyptian nationalism as it appeared in the British press. She also used her influence to reinforce Wilfrid’s more explicit anti-imperialist activism. Her writing and political activities helped provide an alternative to the political language of the government and what became the official mind. Anne and Wilfrid’s efforts on behalf of Egyptian Nationalists during and after the Egyptian revolution softened the blow of the British invasion and occupation by keeping the nationalists’ story alive in the British press. Lady Anne and Wilfrid’s intervention to defend and save the lives of Egyptian Nationalists resulted in the exiles of Ahmed Arabi and many of his fellow revolutionaries; without such intervention, most of the revolutionaries, if not all of them, would have perished from execution or incarceration. Anne and Wilfrid’s constant correspondence with the revolutionaries-in-exile kept the spirit of liberty alive for much longer than it would have lasted had the nationalists been executed and the voice of revolution completely silenced. Their consistent correspondence and Wilfrid’s publications also kept the intellectual foundations of the pursuit of liberty alive in the minds of younger Egyptians who would pursue revolution and liberty again—and more successfully—after the First World War.

Another important aspect to the role played by Lady Anne and Wilfrid in the winter of 1881-1882 in Egypt was the political encouragement they gave to the Egyptian nationalists. Native Egyptians earned the respect of Anne and Wilfrid, and their partnership gave additional confidence to the Egyptians, as well as guidance within the

Anglo-Turkish political framework. The twofold effect of saving the core of the Nationalist Party, and the encouragement they provided to Egyptians to fight for their rights and freedom, remained in the Egyptian consciousness.<sup>538</sup> These two aspects of Lady Anne and Wilfrid's involvement served the Egyptians well when they eventually began to win their freedom from Britain after the First World War, with the 1919 revolution.<sup>539</sup>

By keeping the Egyptians' story alive in the press, and fusing it with that of India's Muslims, and with Irish Home Rule, Anne and Wilfrid arguably influenced the historiography of the empire during their time. Anne and Wilfrid's account of the actors in Egypt and in England who influenced policy and events during the Egyptian revolution of 1882 made an important contribution to the historical record and the future term, "sub-imperialisms."<sup>540</sup> Anne's journals chronicle the influences of British agents in Cairo and their Turko-Circassian collaborators as they deflected stated official policy, which temporarily favored Egyptian nationalism and liberty, toward new and unexpected policies maneuvered from both London and Cairo. The new policies gradually grew hostile to Egyptian nationalists and resulted in efforts to return Egypt to the previous status quo. Anne's journals also reflect the struggles between policy-makers themselves, as London's government officials sought to maintain control over the stated policy and events on the ground in far-away Cairo. From these struggles, and the analysis of them generations later, the concept of policy being driven by "men on the spot" emerged in

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<sup>538</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, Blunt mss, diaries, Part VI, 47, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

<sup>539</sup> Anne and Wilfrid corresponded with later Egyptian revolutionary, Saad Zaghloul, whose efforts to improve education during the British occupation led to the advancement of both Gamal Abd el Nasser and Anwar el Sadat, who led the Free Officers Revolution in 1952.

<sup>540</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism* (London: I.B. Tauris, ), .

twentieth century historiography.<sup>541</sup> Lady Anne's journals also reveal the multi-level character of the Egyptian revolution, with its representation from diverse elements of Egyptian society. Her journals support the concept of a true revolution in which "Egypt for the Egyptians" was a tangible goal with a structured plan for achieving it. Lady Anne portrayed the revolutionaries as diverse but committed patriots fighting for the right of self-determination and representative government, not just a collection of disgruntled army officers. The diverse coalition was held together with the common purpose of driving out the crushing foreign interests and bureaucracy, represented by the Dual Control and later the Joint Note.<sup>542</sup>

Lady Anne and Wilfrid's extensive travels in the Arab world, knowledge of the language and culture, and long-term residence in Egypt, provided credibility for their support of Egyptian nationalism and self-government in England, Europe, and Egypt, and brought the discussion of colonial governance and native rights to the forefront of political discussion. As Lord Cromer's Egypt achieved stability in the world status quo, Cromer intermittently sought Wilfrid Blunt's advice, and often acted on the latter's advice, subtly claiming such actions as his own policy. As a result, small steps of progress for Egyptians slowly occurred: Muhammad Abduh, close friend and neighbor of Lady Anne and Wilfrid, became mufti of Cairo in 1899; Egyptian reformer and nationalist Saad Zaghloul became minister of education in 1906. With the latter appointment, Cromer made a concession for the government to provide a modicum of

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<sup>541</sup> This note is in reference to Robinson and Gallagher, with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, and Wm. Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

<sup>542</sup> Juan Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East*, 277. Lady Anne's journals support, at least in part, the thesis of Cole that the causes of the revolution were multi-layered and that the European interference and Dual Control served to exacerbate existing grievances, such as capitulations.



education for Egyptians, mostly for the benefit of agricultural production.<sup>543</sup> For Cromer, the idea of providing publicly financed education had not been previously possible, both because in his time, state policy and public education were not mutually assumed, and because Cromer feared insurrection from the educated and dispossessed.<sup>544</sup> Cromer had learned colonial administration in India and took those lessons with him to Egypt, much like Lady Anne took the political lessons of Egypt with her to India. By the time Cromer appointed Zaghoul as minister of education in 1906, Cromer had consolidated his rule during more than two decades and he believed that minimal education was necessary to satisfy influential Egyptians and to maintain lower and middle level trained administrative personnel.<sup>545</sup> Cromer's appointment of Zaghoul was evidence of the Blunts' influence, even if indirect. Cromer's support of Abduh as mufti of Cairo was another indication of his tacit acknowledgement of the Blunts' knowledge and influence, since Abduh was the Blunts' neighbor and close friend.<sup>546</sup>

Lady Anne led her life with an important sense of purpose: to improve the world around her. Her world was broader than most, so her efforts reached farther than most philanthropists or social activists of her time. Lady Anne's activism was broader based than basic social or financial activism, in that she sought to influence policy on behalf of native people in four of the major cornerstones of the British Empire: Egypt, Arabia, India, and Ireland.

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<sup>543</sup> Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 276.

<sup>544</sup> Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 314.

<sup>545</sup> Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer*, 342.

<sup>546</sup> LAB Journals, SH, Voll, 95—Abduh was a reformer and used his position as mufti to institute reforms in al Azhar, as well as to encourage modern Islamic philosophical thought. He was also willing to compromise his revolutionary activities in favor of working within the British administrative framework; this position allowed him to maintain influence in Cairo.

Throughout all of her political activities, Anne's heart and soul were in the Arab world and Egypt. Her primary focus was on Egypt, Arabia, and Arab people, but she saw the stark similarities in the aspirations and oppression of Muslims in India and Catholics in Ireland, and her conscience would not allow her to ignore injustice when it came to her attention. She also thought that pursuing justice in India or in Ireland would further the cause of liberty and justice in Egypt. Lady Anne maintained her English heritage, always behaving as a well-mannered English lady—traditional attire, social mores, manners, and speech—but she simultaneously absorbed and understood the languages, cultures, and religions in which she lived and traveled. Her broad worldview was cosmopolitan in scope and sympathy. Lady Anne's worldview was the basis of her holding England to a higher standard of thought and behavior on the world stage.

Lady Anne's inherent belief in the viability of indigenous, or native, self-government implied an optimistic view of world power and the ability of sovereign nations of darker-skinned peoples to function independently in a western-dominated world milieu. Imperialism, by its very nature, implied an obsession with imperial security, which could not tolerate nationalist impulses.<sup>547</sup> Anne's disappointment with the British Empire's oppression of dark-skinned peoples, which implied insecurity and pessimism, and its uneven application of the English ideal of liberty, which would imply optimism, were the defining elements of her lifelong distaste for empire.

One of the subtler ways in which Lady Anne had a positive effect on the Arab world and its perception by the west, was through her portrayal of Arab people. She did not embellish the romantic, exotic, lusty, Orientalist images of eastern men and women

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<sup>547</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, "Robinson and Gallagher and Their Critics," *Ends of British Imperialism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 914.

like many of her contemporary artists and writers did. Lady Anne arguably deconstructed the Orientalist visions of harems, Arab sheikhs, Arab horses, and the Arab way of life. Her writing provided the antithesis of tales of eastern excess behind veils and mushrabia, which were the basis for much of the sensational Orientalist literature genre that remained popular well into the next century.<sup>548</sup>

With the imperial backdrop of the dubious Cyprus Convention of 1878, France and Britain had unwittingly launched what became known as the “scramble for Africa”<sup>549</sup> as they invaded Tunisia and Egypt, respectively, after secret negotiations between them. Anne’s journals and Wilfrid’s publications provide an excellent account of the complex and intense daily events that led to equally complicated, inconsistent, policy decisions in London and Cairo. Both the “men on the spot” in Cairo, such as consul Edward Malet and British finance manager Auckland Colvin, caused events to happen; in London, the policy-makers and policy-changers including Prime Minister Gladstone, Granville and First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Northbrook, manipulated policy from their offices as well. Duplicity and conflicts of interest occurred in both the London and Cairo administrations, leading to the confusing and ultimately destructive bombardment of Alexandria. Anne and Wilfrid’s grandson, Anthony Lytton, quoted Wilfrid’s diaries: Anthony Lytton, later Lord Lytton, grandson of Anne and Wilfrid, whose paternal grandfather was former Viceroy of India Robert Lytton, wrote, “The political differences between my two grandfathers were to grow ever wider, the literary understanding ever

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<sup>548</sup> Mushrabia is the Egyptian architectural equivalent of latic-work. It was a carved wooden screen used to make balconies more private, allowing air circulation, but providing shade and privacy for families and harems.

<sup>549</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries, 1888-1914* (London: Martin Secker, 1932), xv. Blunt used this term as the title of the first part of his published diaries in 1919. This term, “Scramble for Africa” became a commonly used term after the publication of the pivotal book, *Africa and the Victorians*, by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, in 1961.

closer.” Anthony observed that in 1880, the two grandfathers held similar views, and both agreed at that time, as Wilfrid wrote, “that the day of England’s empire is fast ending—for my own part I do not care how soon. Lytton has more patriotism.”<sup>550</sup> Anne made similar remarks in her journals. Anne and Wilfrid were far more exposed to the plight of indigenous people in the Empire than the majority of the British administrators with whom they socialized. Their ambitious journeys had given them unparalleled opportunities to see empires at work and to learn from all of the regional empires’ subjects what imperial life really meant.

Understanding the thought and politics of Lady Anne Blunt requires traveling with her on her lengthy desert treks through Turkey, Algeria, and Syria, where she first learned the culture, geography, horses, and religions of Turkish, Berber, and Arab peoples. Her travels in Mesopotamia and Arabia helped create her political awareness that later defined her political activity in Egypt and in England.

As Anne and Wilfrid moved eastward in their journeys, Anne’s journals reflected changes in what she recorded. The earlier journals, from Turkey, Algeria and Sinai, for example, contain details about geological formations and locations, streams and riverbeds, flora and fauna, barometric readings, and the people they encountered. Her observations about people were usually descriptions of their features, their daily lives, and their character. She observed and recorded local religious beliefs and ceremonies, hunting traditions, and the horses and other animals who shared her path. Anne painted detailed watercolors in her journals, depicting landscapes, buildings, people, animals, or homes that she saw during her travels. She recorded evidence of imperial injustice in Turkey and in Algeria, but it was Egypt, with its Dual Control and European interference,

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<sup>550</sup> Lord Lytton, *Wilfrid Scawen Blunt*, 82.

that piqued Anne's attention and inspired her desire to find her useful purpose in supporting Egyptian efforts to find liberty and self-government. Anne developed her political persona first in Egypt, then refined it in India and Ireland. She watched Egypt's transformation from an almost independent Ottoman territory into a British colonial subject, if nominally maintaining the appearance of an Ottoman vassal. Throughout these transitions, Anne continued to hope for Egyptian liberty and self-government, even through the efficient, if oppressive, reign of Proconsul Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer.

Knowledge of the history, culture, and language of imperial societies was an assumed fact by Lady Anne and Wilfrid. They initially believed that their neighbors, as well as the policy-makers of England, would be interested in incorporating the Blunts' multi-dimensional knowledge into the official policy of the Empire. Anne also believed that the official mind wanted to incorporate historical and cultural knowledge in the process of creating policy.<sup>551</sup> Her instinctive belief in the necessity for her imperial government to understand its colonial subjects' concept of their past and their culture was ahead of its time. The creation of academic studies of regional foreign lands was a product of similar thought many years after Lady Anne's observations.

Because they entered into the Arab world without preconceived assumptions about the people, their culture or their religion, Anne and Wilfrid were able to gain a balanced view of the Arab world and to understand its nuances of culture and tradition. It was the incorporation of these nuances into their grasp of Arab character that helped form the cosmopolitan worldview that made Lady Anne and Wilfrid such distinctive

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<sup>551</sup> Peter Beck, *Using History, Making British Policy: The Treasury and the Foreign Office 1950-1976* (Houndsmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3. This book covers a period nearly a century after Lady Anne Blunt and her husband were active in politics, but the premise of this book is relevant. Beck demonstrates the valuable contribution historical knowledge made in various cases of British policy-making.

chroniclers of the Arab world in their time. They adopted the natives' struggle for independence as they watched the European powers scramble to dominate every corner of the region.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Lady Anne's travels and journals were the journeys into Arabia. For a western woman to travel to the palace of Ibn Rashid in Hail in 1879 was not only uncommon, but was the first visit of its kind in modern history. Anne was able to find common ground with the Arab sheikhs, the women of the harems, and with the children of the tribes. She held all people accountable to the same basic principles of good manners, hospitality, and integrity. Anne also reflected these attributes and arguably established a positive rapport for those who ventured into Arabia after her.

Lady Anne Blunt understood the motives of people who resisted oppression and fought for liberty, just as she understood the motives of officials who protected their political or financial self-interest in spite of what would appear to be clear choices that would enhance the greater good. Anne and Wilfrid found themselves at the center of a political storm of controversy between the non-interventionist, Liberal, "Little Englanders," and the pro-interventionist, Tory, imperialists, or jingoists, just as England was consolidating a true empire. Anne and Wilfrid witnessed the "gentlemanly capitalists" as they sought to protect their financial investments in Egypt, first through the Dual Control, then later through jingoist intervention and invasion. Anne and Wilfrid also witnessed the convocation of European powers in their effort to maintain the last vestiges of the status quo in Egypt. The previous four years had seen that status quo shaken by the Cyprus Convention and the French invasion of Tunisia. Anne and Wilfrid experienced and gradually understood all of these factors as they were happening in Cairo and in London.

The one factor that Anne and Wilfrid possibly underestimated was the factor of the British obsession with prestige.<sup>552</sup> Anne did not view the successes or failures of native peoples in relation to the supposed superiority of Britain. She judged people with the egalitarian, cosmopolitan worldview that this dissertation has described through Anne's own words. Because Anne did not share the prevailing view of British superiority in culture, religion, and power, she did not perceive the enormous influence that prestige could have in guiding policy in London and Cairo. Anne believed that she and Wilfrid could influence public opinion by prevailing upon the English tradition of liberty and justice for all people. What they did not understand was the perceived injury to British prestige when native people, who belonged to an apparent underclass according to British perception, succeeded in their efforts against British power. Official Britain could view the success of Ahmed Arabi and his Egyptian Nationalist army as an affront to Britain's position as a dominant world power; perceived or real British hegemony could not survive a native-led defeat in Egypt. With the echoes of the Indian mutiny of 1857 ringing loudly in the policy-makers' ears, intervention and invasion seemed to be the only choice. Egypt had to be maintained at almost any cost for fear of losing India in a similar scenario. Anne and Wilfrid underestimated the power of the fear of the loss of British prestige. The obsession with prestige was a correlation with the imperial obsession with security and its inability to tolerate proto-nationalist uprisings.<sup>553</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> Dan Halvorson, "Prestige, Prudence, and Public Opinion in the 1882 British Occupation of Egypt," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*: Volume 56, Number 3, 2010, pp. 423-440. Parts of the conclusion have a basis in this article. Also, James Belich, *The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict: The Maori, the British, and the New Zealand Wars* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986). This book argues that British forces prevailed against native Maori warriors because they were able to muster more soldiers than the Maori population had to offer during the almost three decades of warfare. British prestige precluded their admitting defeat due to Maori military superiority.

<sup>553</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, "Robinson and Gallagher and Their Critics," *Ends of British Imperialism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 914.

After a decade of effort to influence policy in a direction that would encourage native liberty, social welfare, and legal justice, with Wilfrid's publications and Anne's constant writings and conversations with influential politicians, Wilfrid decided not to run for Parliament a third time, and Anne decided to focus on her horse breeding farm. Anne's primary horse-breeding farm was located at Crabbet, their Sussex home, with a satellite farm on their garden property at Sheykh Obeyd, outside Cairo. She and Wilfrid, and their daughter, Judith, divided their time between Egypt during the winter and early spring months, and summers in England. Under Cromer's watch in Egypt, Anne wrote often of the continual presence of spies. After almost seven years of British occupation, many Egyptians still hoped for Arabi's return to lead the National Party, partly because of Anne and Wilfrid's efforts to keep the Egyptians' plight in the British and Egyptian consciousness in the London and Cairo presses. In 1889, a shopkeeper in Cairo met with Wilfrid to ask for the latter's assistance in meeting with soldiers who were still loyal to Arabi; Anne and Wilfrid quickly dispensed with the shopkeeper and his ideas. Anne wrote,

Wilfrid, I believe vigorously, repelled any notion of such action, and I hope the little Mattar [shopkeeper] was convinced of his own folly as well as of the harm he may be doing us if he commits any follies, for the multitude of spies must report that he visits us. The station master at Cairo told Wilfrid as a secret that every day two police officers go to Matarieh [the station near the Blunts' farm, Sheykh Obeyd] on his account to report news. I fancy they oftener stay at Matarieh and pick up there what they can then come on here to the garden...<sup>554</sup>

Anne and Wilfrid knew by this time, almost seven years into the British occupation, that Cromer's authority could not be challenged, and that Arabi could not be brought back as a leader of an opposition army. Anne's tone reflects her pragmatic acceptance of the fact

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<sup>554</sup> LAB journals add mss 53971, 2 March 1889.



of British power, even if it lacked integrity in its dominance. With such a fait accompli, Anne and Wilfrid did not want to jeopardize their life and farm in Egypt; they knew from hard experience—in Egypt, India, and Ireland—that it could happen.

Anne never lost contact with her friends who had sacrificed their lives or livelihoods for Egyptian liberty. She maintained correspondence with the Egyptian nationalist exiles and their wives, keeping them current on political events and encouraging them in their understandable emotional downturns while in exile. With government spies reporting on their movements and conversations in Cairo, Anne and Wilfrid were careful to protect the remaining Egyptian activists there. Lord Cromer, who became consul-general of Cairo in 1883, after the revolution, remained in office and in nearly total power for almost thirty years. His autocratic rule mitigated any efforts that remaining Nationalists had to push for governmental reform. Cromer's concern was balancing the budget, and political reform, in his estimation, would be too expensive, if not dangerous, to pursue.

Anne and Wilfrid measured their experiences and efforts in Ireland and India against those in Egypt and Arabia. Anne, like Wilfrid often used the Arabs' imperial experience as an analogy for those in other parts of the Empire. Wilfrid wrote, "Indeed, the dealings of the Government with the Irish peasantry remind me of nothing more than that of the Turks with the Arab fellahin about Aleppo."<sup>555</sup> Another example of the universality of the Egyptians' plight was Wilfrid's letter to the Irish political activist, John Redmond, after American President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed Egyptians incapable of self-government. He wrote:

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<sup>555</sup> Earl of Lytton, *Wilfrid Scawen Blunt* (London: Macdonald, 1961), 201. The quote is Wilfrid's, 15 May 1886.

My view of the case is this: Roosevelt's speech at the Mansion House laid it down as the basis of all European dealing with Egypt that the Egyptians and orientals generally are, and always will remain, incapable of self-government, and consequently need to be ruled by foreigners. An opinion of this kind in Roosevelt's mouth was of little importance, for Roosevelt is an ignorant fellow, and his speech would have been a mere impertinence if it had stood alone.

But Grey [British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey] has now distinctly endorsed it and admitted himself responsible for its having been made. Unless, therefore, the Liberals emphatically repudiate Grey, England stands committed by both parties to a doctrine which will certainly be applied, not only to Egypt, but to every other nationality in the East... The two English parties, through their leaders, will certainly combine against you as they have combined in the Egyptian crisis...<sup>556</sup>

Wilfrid, like Anne, viewed natives' pursuit of liberty as a universal struggle. Anne was able to view the world as a cosmopolitan—a citizen of the world—a position that was more difficult for career politicians to adopt. For both of them, Egypt was inextricably tied to Ireland (and to India) through the bondage of the British Empire.

Anne often wrote of Wilfrid's serious health concerns, and detailed many sleepless nights caring for him on their travels and at home in England. Wilfrid's lifelong health problems, usually breathing or lung-related, resulted in his eventually appearing to be addicted to laudanum. He also suffered from back pain, and the combination of ailments grew almost paralyzing as Wilfrid aged. The mixture of some measure of post-political depression, pain, and drug addiction exacerbated the strains on Anne and Wilfrid's marriage. Their competition for Judith's love, education, health, and attention, created deep emotional divisions in the family, and likely led to Judith's antagonism of both of them during her adult years. Judith published some of her own writings in conjunction with her mother's notes on Arab horses in *The Authentic Arabian Horse*.

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<sup>556</sup> Earl of Lytton, *Wilfrid Scawen Blunt*, 213. This quote appears in a copy of Wilfrid's letter to John Redmond, 20 June 1910, and is evidence of his enduring political writing activity. By this time, Anne and Wilfrid had divorced, and Anne was less politically active by this time, but still sympathized with the Egyptians the Indians, and the Irish who struggled for liberty.

Judith, by then Lady Wentworth, portrayed her mother as the saintly victim of Wilfrid's whims, his flighty world travels, and what she called his delusional bids for Parliament. Lady Wentworth created a legacy for her parents that differs remarkably from Anne's accounts in her journals, with the exception of Wilfrid's infidelities. Wilfrid's succession of lovers coincided with Anne's increased attention to detail, particularly when they were living at Crabbet. Both of them viewed their time in Egypt and Arabia as the happiest of their lives; Judith did not experience those times and her later writings served to almost negate the positive aspects of Anne and Wilfrid's relationship.

Lady Anne's Stradivarius violin, her Crabbet Arabian Horse Stud, and its sister farm, Sheykh Obeyd, were metaphors for her life: excellence in all pursuits, a sense of higher purpose, a broad, cosmopolitan worldview, and an egalitarian commitment to justice. Anne was always willing to expend the extra effort to achieve her goals, whether it was purchasing and playing a world-class violin, searching the deserts of Arabia for the finest horses, or helping Egyptian Nationalists design an independent, original, constitutional government. Lady Anne Blunt personified the ideals of liberty and justice in Egypt, Arabia, India, and the Empire.

This dissertation does not follow Lady Anne's political activities and correspondence after 1890, other than in general terms. The conclusions are based on the major travels Anne and Wilfrid pursued, their experience-based education in the Arab world, and the height of their political careers, hers largely out of the public eye, his almost completely in the public eye. The dual denouement Anne and Wilfrid experienced affected each of them differently, but for both of them, it ultimately brought their marital strains into sharper focus. The legacy of a dysfunctional marriage, Wilfrid's infidelities, and Anne and Wilfrid's eventual divorce in 1907, were partially the result of their failed

political efforts and what could be called an aftermath of boredom due to the restrictions imposed on their political activity. Having lived their lives without borders, and having survived the ambitious journeys they made, and then finding themselves under Cromer's watch in Egypt and out of favor politically while in England, was a difficult adjustment. Other factors contributed to their divorce as well, such as their competition for parenting supremacy in Judith's upbringing. Other factors included Wilfrid's health and apparent dependency on laudanum, a popular opium-based medication of the time. It was likely this time period, with its strains, that contributed to Judith's negative view of her mother's participation in her long journeys and in Egyptian, Indian, and Irish politics. She was a child during the formative years of Anne and Wilfrid's long journeys and major political activities, so she missed the philosophical, emotional, and pragmatic commitment her mother exhibited on behalf of Egyptian liberty, Indian education, and Irish Home Rule.

Anne and Wilfrid have had a lasting political relevance that has increased with time. Wilfrid's publications, when viewed in retrospect, have remarkable prescience, and support the observations Anne made in her personal journals. His writings were often either attacked or deemed eccentric or frivolous by his contemporaries who had felt the glare of exposure from his accounts. Few modern historians have taken Wilfrid's writings seriously enough to include them as the basis of their research, even though minimal reference to his writings is intermittently cited in footnotes.<sup>557</sup> Historian Alexander Scholch was one of the few who acknowledged Wilfrid as a major source in the text of

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<sup>557</sup> Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1968), 58. Porter does acknowledge and cite Wilfrid's influence, but does not give him the extensive coverage that Wilfrid's volume of publications likely deserve, considering the title of the book.

his historical account of the Egyptian revolution.<sup>558</sup> Anne's work to convince the public of the greater benefit of holding government policy accountable to the universal values of liberty and justice for native people has withstood the test of time. She had the advantage of having nothing to gain from her efforts, unlike the career politicians of her time, such as Gladstone's financial interests in the Suez Canal, or the Baring Brothers' banks with financial interests in Egypt, and controller Auckland Colvin's overwhelming interest in British intervention in Egypt.<sup>559</sup> Anne's dispassionate records of political events provide a more transparent account of the period than many of the official sources of the time.

The legacy of Lady Anne Blunt's journals and Wilfrid Blunt's publications can be included in the large body of political philosophy that grew out of the anti-imperialist sentiment that the Blunts instigated. The long-term effect of the social position that Lady Anne provided for both herself and Wilfrid was the access they had to the upper echelon of political, financial, and social power of the day, in England, Egypt, Arabia, and India. Lady Anne's record of her conversations with leaders at all levels of political energy and power planted the seeds of ideas of independence, education, and justice, in Egypt, India, and Ireland, which were the pillars of the British Empire. Her political work was not published, but her influence was vast and unmistakable, in part because her knowledge of the Arab world and Muslim people was unsurpassed. Lady Anne was also influential because her social position gave her credibility in her homeland, as well as in the Arab world and India. The long-term effect of Lady Anne, her husband, and her political effort

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<sup>558</sup>Alexander Schölch, The 'Men on the Spot' and the English Occupation of Egypt in 1882, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Sep., 1976), pp. 773-785. Published by: Cambridge University Press  
Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2638229>, accessed 3 August 2011.

<sup>559</sup> Alexander Schölch, The 'Men on the Spot' and the English Occupation of Egypt in 1882, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Sep., 1976), pp. 773-785. Published by: Cambridge University Press  
Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2638229>, accessed 3 August 2011.

was the swelling of anti-imperialist sentiment that eventually gave rise to the political philosophies that defined politics in the twentieth century: imperialism and socialism. Lady Anne never described herself as a follower of any such distinct philosophical group, but her pragmatic sense of egalitarian liberty and justice along with her sense of belonging to a cosmopolitan community, placed her in the forefront of what became the nationalist movements of the twentieth century. Lady Anne's ideas, along with her husband's publications, helped inform the arguments of the Radical movements that gradually unraveled the British Empire in the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>560</sup> In a sense, she was part of the "whirlwind that burst of the empire and shattered it."<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire*, 337. While Porter does not give specific credit to either of the Blunts for this influence, he does argue that the "[nationalist movements]...were all in some degree influenced by the ideas which Radicals had worked out in the 1890's and early 1900's, in response to the situation of that time as they saw it."

<sup>561</sup> LAB journals, add. 53936, 17 January 1884.

## Appendix A

### Lady Anne and Wilfrid: Marriage and Parenting

Lady Anne and Wilfrid married in 1869, had two miscarriages or stillbirths by 1871, and another on their journey to Algeria in 1874. The second child they lost in 1871 was a boy, disappointing Wilfrid's desire for a male heir. These losses of children (they also lost twins a few years later) contributed to the obsession that both Anne and Wilfrid developed for their one surviving child, Judith Anne Dorothea Blunt, later Lady Wentworth. Anne worried constantly about her health and from her own insecurity as a mother. Wilfrid desperately wanted a son, but once he realized that Judith was to be his only offspring, he focused attention on her. The parental obsessions of Anne and Wilfrid developed into competition for Judith—both for her attention and for her health, education, and recreation—and creating discord between the parents in the process. When Anne arrived at Crabbet to find Judith had been at an all-day picnic outdoors in the forest and at the cottage, Anne wrote, "This is the way Judith's health is risked in my absence. I ought not to be absent."<sup>562</sup> The next day, Anne wrote that Judith was feverish in the morning but recovered by the afternoon. Wilfrid "made light of what I said of her health and his own carelessness—oh! He thought Miss Le Febvre had gone to fetch her, etc. It is late to regret things now."<sup>563</sup> This discord occurred in the same month as the

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<sup>562</sup> LAB journals, add 53917, 27 July 1882. What is interesting about Anne's maternal comment here is that she did not have the same reaction to her months-long absences from Judith, when Judith was in the care of her neighbor and close friend, Minnie Pollen. This type of life-or-death concern seemed more intense when Wilfrid was the offender. One of Melman's observations in her study of western women in the Middle East is that western culture placed children in a secondary position in the household, compared with the primary position of children in eastern culture. (Melman, 157) It is possible that Anne's long absences, in Judith's early years, were followed by her obsession with Judith in later childhood and adolescence. It is also possible that the influence of eastern culture, with its more prominent position for children, influenced Anne's later relationship with Judith.

<sup>563</sup> LAB journals, add 53917, 27 July 1882.

British bombing of Alexandria, which would have added to the overall emotional stress for both Anne and Wilfrid.

One of the clearest descriptions of the Lady Anne and Wilfrid's marital relationship is the observation made by one of their family friends, Emily Lytton (later Lady Emily Lutyens). Emily chronicled several events that happened during her visits, and she added her own analysis in her journal. When Anne, Wilfrid, and Judith took Emily for a ride, their focus on Judith resulted in their competing for her attentions, and their inordinate concentration on her every move. Anne also corrected Emily in her riding posture and style, and Emily commented on the scene:

Lady Anne found fault with me a good deal, but tried to make up a little when we came home by saying, 'You look so nice it is a pleasure to see you'.... Though they ride every day, from the fuss that is made about the horses, you would suppose that it is a very unusual thing to go for a ride.... Lady Anne fusses dreadfully over everything.<sup>564</sup>

Emily referred to Anne as very sweet, but also very fussy, giving meticulous attention to small details. She noted that Wilfrid snubbed Anne, and that Anne often commented on it. When Wilfrid left the house, Anne's fussed over Judith. Emily later had an occasion to ride alone with Anne, which prompted another view of her friend's mother:

"Lady Anne is much nicer by herself than with other people and she was charming to me yesterday, and begged I would often come back here and have some really good riding..."<sup>565</sup> It was likely the three-way stress and competition between Anne, Wilfrid, and Judith that determined Anne's personality in a social situation such as that described by Emily Lytton.

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<sup>564</sup> Lady Emily Lutyens, *A Blessed Girl* (London: Rupert Hart Davis), 119. Entry in Emily Lytton's journal, 30 June 1892, during a visit to Crabbet Stud. Emily Lytton and Judith Blunt became close friends, just as their parents, Robert and Edith Lytton and Wilfrid and Lady Anne Blunt, were close friends.

<sup>565</sup> Lutyens, *Blessed Girl*, 120.



Regarding Judith and her parents, Emily noted that both Wilfrid and Anne “simply worship Judith and yet quarrel about her.” She also wrote, “I do pity Lady Anne for the way she is snubbed, but I think that like all snubbed people, she does the very things to make it worse.”<sup>566</sup> Emily’s reference to Anne’s being snubbed by Wilfrid is supported by comments Anne wrote in her own journals:

I don’t like the position of being always treated as a complete stranger—it doesn’t matter in my own house but amongst strangers it is uncomfortable to be answered gruffly, or suddenly for him [Wilfrid] to go off without notice leaving me in the lurch...<sup>567</sup>

Anne wrote the above in reference to visiting the De la Warrs at their country home. She added that traveling abroad for a useful purpose mitigated such uncomfortable situations, but that she would not suffer “an objectless waste of time” in a miserable situation.

Anne worried about Judith’s health to the point of obsession, likely due to the trauma of having lost so many children. When Wilfrid took Judith out riding until after dark in wet weather, Anne wrote of having begged Wilfrid not to take her, then suffering Wilfrid’s rebuke for being foolish. She could not understand Wilfrid’s willingness to risk Judith’s health—her life, as Anne saw it—when he had no other children to survive him. She lamented to her journal, “Oh God give me patience and take not away this one my only child. My only desire and prayer is to do what is right for her good.”<sup>568</sup>

On another occasion, Anne’s “fussiness” as Emily Lutyens described it, caused her to enroll Judith in riding lessons. Wilfrid objected to the riding school, seeing Judith’s equestrian skill as satisfactory. Anne believed that Judith needed more instruction in

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<sup>566</sup> Lutyens, *Blessed Girl*, 120. These observations, written in 1892, when Emily was seventeen years old, are remarkably prescient for a young girl. Also, Anne and Wilfrid had been married for a little over twenty years; the Egyptian revolution was a decade earlier, and their most ambitious travels had happened a few years before. Emily witnessed the “Britain marriage.”

<sup>567</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53955, 19 December 1885.

<sup>568</sup> Archer, et al, *Lady Anne Blunt, Journals and Correspondence*, 177.

order to improve her proper form. Anne found Wilfrid's misplaced praise and interruptions of the lessons a cause for Judith's equestrian education to be "very insufficiently learned. It is something gained however that she knows now that she is very far from perfection in riding."<sup>569</sup> Anne sought perfection in horses and politics, and equitation was no exception.

Anne noticed manners in nearly every person she met, in all countries, as she often recorded in her journals. In regard to Judith, Anne regarded manners as a most important element of her training. When Judith was ten years old, after having had dinner with her parents, Anne observed that her daughter's manners were "going downhill." She wrote that "I feel I am to blame for not having perceived sooner that if gentle means have not an immediate effect, serious pressure must be put and the spoiling systems stopped."

Observations like these provide the basis for the reports of marital dysfunction between Wilfrid and Anne, but they also illustrate the reason for the two marriages that Wilfrid and Anne had. One was the marriage of the east; the other was the marriage of Britain.<sup>570</sup>

My married life may be divided pretty evenly as a narrative into two quite separate existences: the first devoted to art, poetry, the romance of the heart, at home in Europe; the second romantic too, but on quite other lines, those of travel in wild lands abroad, in Asia and North Africa. The two, though constantly overlapping in point of time, had little relation to each other in the things that occupied my thoughts, and stood, I may almost say, on separate intellectual bases and bases of morality. Whereas, in England, adventures with women occupied almost all its foreground and were pursued by me with unscrupulous eagerness and in defiance of domesticities, my inner life in the old fashioned East was sober and restrained. Women, except my wife, had no part in it, nor had I a single love adventure to record or even the beginning of an adventure.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> Archer, *Lady Anne Blunt Journals*, 177.

<sup>570</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, Blunt mss, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

<sup>571</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, Blunt mss, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Underlying the two marriages was the competition for Judith—for her attention and for her discipline. Parenting in between long absences, with marital stresses occurring most often at home in Britain, created extra tension in the Blunt household.

In the east, Anne's attention to detail resulted in necessary planning and execution of complicated and bold ventures into the virtually unknown Arab desert. In the east, the desert environment and Anne as a partner satisfied Wilfrid's passion and imagination.

I had little time for thought, only for observation and the unconscious logic of experience which leads back to wisdom of the old world kind, still less for the passionate longing bred of idleness which leads our souls astray in Europe.

...Such was my traveling mood and such my way of life, one I could fully share with Anne nor ask for any more companionship of soul than what she gave. We were always happy together during our travels, our interests and our feelings being in perfect unison, our love of riding, our love of horses and camels and tent life the same—For this near on during the many months we spent each year abroad together I kept no journals. I had no secrets to set down in one; what I thought she thought, what I did she did—what I felt she felt. These times were our times of marriage, more than in Europe, and they were happy times.

Anne also relished her trips into the desert and the life she led camping in tents and riding horseback in largely unknown lands. Her meticulous mind noticed details of the land, life, and peoples she and Wilfrid visited, and she noted, in both art and word, the details of the culture and life that their desert hosts lived. Her early journals became books, and were well received by publishers and the public.<sup>572</sup> It was through these books that Anne and Wilfrid were initially known for their broad knowledge of the eastern world.

In Britain, the marriage was a different relationship, with all of the competition for Judith, the political efforts, and the distractions and temptations of London society for Wilfrid. For Anne, boredom with much of London society found some replacement with

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<sup>572</sup> Lady Anne Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* and *A Pilgrimage to Nejd*. Both books were edited by Wilfrid, but the bulk of the work is taken from Anne's journals. In this way, Anne's writing not only provided credibility for Anne as a researcher and writer, but a conduit for Wilfrid to publish his poetry.

the horses, but Anne generally lacked a sufficient outlet for her energy and intellect until she and Wilfrid became politically active. Wilfrid found an outlet for his energy through the publication of his political essays and his poetry. Wilfrid was gregarious; Anne enjoyed stimulating conversation, but was not as gregarious as Wilfrid. Anne and Wilfrid shared a passion for asil horses of the east, but Anne maintained the passion on a daily basis, with constant attention to the horses, throughout her life. For Wilfrid, political activities sometimes served as a distraction from the horses while he was in Britain; for Anne, the horses provided some measure of comfort when Wilfrid was away. The marital strains in Britain were enormous, but semi-annual sojourns to the east kept the marriages repaired for the first three decades of their existence. Once Wilfrid's health prevented regular, extended visits to the east and the desert, his philandering, coupled with Anne's fussiness, and their ongoing competition over Judith, complicated the balance between the two marriages.

One of the other areas in which Anne and Wilfrid shared mutual and compatible interests was in their architectural preference. Before the death of Wilfrid's elder brother, Francis, and Wilfrid's inheritance of his ancestral home, Newbuildings, Anne and Wilfrid built their own home, named Crabbet Park, hence the name of their horse farm, Crabbet Arab Horse Stud.

The architectural work also was my own and Anne's, for we designed it together as to ground floor elevations and decorations, helped only as to the technicalities of structure by intelligent Clek of the workers [?] provided for us as in the case of the Crawley monument, by Pollen. The house has I think this merit that it was one of the first perhaps quite the first built in rebellion against the Early Victorian Gothic and Italian Gothic house architecture then in vogue. My hatred of this sham Gothic had dated from my school days at Oscott...<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Alms to Oblivion*, ch 4, p. 53. Fitzwilliam Museum, Blunt mss.

Anne and Wilfrid were a team in their travels and in their architecture, and in their rebellion against imperial politics and Gothic Victorian style.

The one area in which cosmopolitan sensibilities did not mitigate their relationships with other people was in the Blunts' marriage. Anne apparently could not stop herself from being obsessive about her daughter; Wilfrid could not stop his need for muses to stoke his passion in poetry and romanticism. In modern vernacular, one might describe Anne as obsessive and compulsive, and Wilfrid as a free spirit; or Anne as a math-type brain and Wilfrid as a creative thinker. These two people shared unique attributes that enabled them to achieve ambitious goals and to set new standards in policy, politics, architecture, and livestock, but they were unable to harness their energies toward a more rewarding marital and parental relationship.

Anne tolerated Wilfrid's infidelities for decades before finally reaching a limit to her tolerance. When Wilfrid hired a nurse who became an assistant, friend, and eventual lover, Dorothy Carleton, his own judgment had declined enough so that he placed Dorothy in the position of hostess in Lady Anne's presence. Lady Anne ultimately divorced Wilfrid in 1906 after this unbearable humiliation.<sup>574</sup>

The process of dividing the property, horses, and assets, led to Anne's decision to leave her property to her granddaughter, Anne Lytton, bypassing her daughter, Judith.<sup>575</sup> Judith had made it clear to her mother that she, Judith, regarded Crabbet as a "hobby," or even as an "amusement." Anne wrote that Judith's referring to the stud as an amusement "made me angry!"<sup>576</sup> Lady Anne could not predict the legal storm that her will would

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<sup>574</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 54075-54078, 14 January 1915.

<sup>575</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 54075-54078, 14 September 1917. Lady Anne died within three months of this letter to her Solicitor, Mr. Holman.

<sup>576</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 54075-54078, 14 September 1917.

cause after her death; it was her will that Judith challenged in court that led to Judith's malignant destruction of her father's reputation.

Judith's anger could have had many causes, but her own perception that her preference for the elder Lytton son, Victor, was denied due to her father's politics, was a lifelong source of her antipathy. Judith's husband, Neville Lytton, was the second Lytton son, and their marriage was unhappy. Judith and Neville divorced in 1923, the year after Wilfrid's death and six years after Lady Anne's death. Lady Anne's death in 1917 bestowed the title of baroness on Judith and she became Lady Wentworth. Judith continued breeding Arabian horses at the Crabbet Arabian Stud until her death in 1957.<sup>577</sup>

Judith's long-term, myopic, effect on the historical perception of her father, in particular, but also of her mother, was to distort the reality of their deep commitment to Egyptian people and their nationalist aspirations. Judith also created an exaggerated, mythical perception of her father as an oversexed egomaniac, with few redeeming qualities other than pleasant poems. Modern historians misread Lady Anne and Wilfrid's relationship in the political sphere as well. Lady Anne was a willing and energetic partner with Wilfrid on their desert travels; Judith portrays her mother as submitting to her father's whims to go on extended trips.<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>577</sup> Rosemary Archer, Colin Pearson, and Cecil Covey, *The Crabbet Arabian Stud, Its History and Influence* (Gloucestershire: Alexander Heriot, 1978), 195.

<sup>578</sup> Billie Melman, *Women's Orients*, Melman's exhaustive work provides a useful context for Lady Anne and her time period. Melman falls victim to Judith Blunt's heavily edited version of Lady Anne's later journals in *The Authentic Arabian Horse*. Due to this partly unreliable source, Melman drew the conclusion that Lady Anne was reflecting the mores of the day by allowing herself to be a submissive wife accompanying her wayward husband on overextended desert trips. Melman consulted a number of Lady Anne's journals, but as her book was an anthology of women travelers, and not a monograph, Melman did not realize the complexity of Lady Anne's persona, as reflected in the hundreds of journals she kept, nor did Melman seem to realize the agency Lady Anne had in making her travels in the deserts.

## **Appendix B: Palmer Expedition**

The Egyptian revolution of 1882 produced complex and complicated responses from the British government, at home and abroad. Policy migrated, or evolved, from supporting Egyptian liberty, to supporting the reigning Ottoman-supported Khedival government, to collaborating with France for an attack on Alexandria. The actors in the Anglo-Egyptian drama portrayed themselves as supporting each of these policy milestones, ostensibly in an attempt to assure themselves of appearing to support the prevailing policy and interest group. Lady Anne and Wilfrid maintained a steady objective, which was to assist the Egyptian National Party and its military leader, Colonel Ahmed Arabi, in their effort to form an independent, viable government in Egypt. After Anne and Wilfrid returned to England to try to influence official policy through connections in Whitehall and articles in the press, they became well-known in England, not only as experienced travelers in the Arab world, but also as Arabi sympathizers and, to a few people, even as traitors.

When Lady Anne and Wilfrid began their political activities in London after their return from Egypt, their priority was to influence policy-making in London and to demonstrate to British citizens the legitimacy of the Egyptian revolutionaries' efforts.<sup>579</sup> The process of writing letters, translating international correspondence, and conversing with both opponents and allies, was almost like a competition for the mind of the British public. Anne and Wilfrid had experienced the surprise of political deception in Egypt,

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<sup>579</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53916, 9 March 1882. Her return to England was the beginning of Lady Anne's more active and overt campaigning for justice for Egypt and the Egyptian nationalists. See also, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Gordon at Khartoum* (London: Stephen Swift, 1912), vi. See also, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), 213.

when their friend, Edward Malet, consul-general for Cairo, denied Wilfrid's being recruited to assist the British in negotiating with the revolutionaries. For Lady Anne, this betrayal, as she viewed it, was a pivotal event. She realized that Malet did not want to betray his friends, but that the current of political sentiment among his colleagues and superiors was so strong, that Malet sacrificed his friendships to facilitate his own survival. For Anne, whose commitment to justice and to creating a useful purpose in her life was central to her persona, Malet's duplicity symbolized a government that was losing its soul, represented by its lack of respect for liberty and justice.<sup>580</sup> In another example of their government's appearing to sacrifice its political soul, Lady Anne witnessed the duplicity of the British position with France and the European powers against the National Party when they co-sponsored the Joint Note in January, 1882.<sup>581</sup> The reality of what appeared to be a change in British political integrity galvanized Anne's resolve to participate fully in her own political activities and in Wilfrid's more public ones.

With the fresh experience of these incidents of perfidy, Anne and Wilfrid were ready for any political development that might happen, but they were still surprised when the widow of Professor Edward Henry Palmer sought their advice and assistance after her husband's mysterious disappearance and murder in August 1882, in the Sinai Desert.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 8 January 1882. This entry refers to the Egyptian reaction to the duplicity they perceived in the Joint Note; it is also during the time that Anne began to realize the perfidy of Malet as well. See also, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Gordon at Khartoum* (London: Stephen Swift, 1912), ix. In his preface, Wilfrid expresses the difference in the modern patriotism of his time, and the patriotism that his generation learned in their youth. Wilfrid wrote of the classic patriotism of the citizen who would fight to defend his home and homeland; also those who had "that other moral courage which strengthened a man to oppose in speech the folly of his fellow men whom he saw doing dishonour to that land." Besides being cosmopolitan enough to view themselves as citizens of the world and citizens of their homeland, Anne believed pragmatically in her duty to object to corruption in government.

<sup>581</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53914, 8 January 1882.

<sup>582</sup> *The Times*, 30 October 1882, via Reuter's telegram, published the notice of news from Colonel Warren that the Palmer party had been confirmed dead. The attack date was 10 August.



Political intrigue seemed to be gaining acceptance as a component of international politics, but the Palmer Expedition, ostensibly a party of scholars providing linguistic support for British troops in the Sinai Desert, marked an important event in the British war effort. The expedition's patriotic appearance provided a cover for the intelligence mission at stake. Lady Anne found herself at the center of the controversy that surrounded the aftermath of this ill-fated mission. The expedition's planning had begun long before the British attack on Alexandria, but the early official story placed its beginnings much later, to give the mission the legitimacy of a wartime defense effort.

Initially, Britain's planned bombardment of Alexandria from warships anchored just offshore was predicted to last only a short time.<sup>583</sup> British newspapers proclaimed the eminent power of the British Navy, which would surely result in the immediate surrender of Egyptian troops, with peace negotiations and a return to the status quo to follow. British forward policy leaders such as Lord Northbrook, First Lord of the Admiralty, decided to increase their chances of success by recruiting the loyalty of Bedouin tribes east of Suez in the Sinai region, in the event that the British would need to use the Suez Canal from the eastern shore. The ultimate purpose of the mission was to engage at least the neutrality, if not the loyalty, of the Bedouin tribes east of the Suez Canal and in the Sinai areas, to aid the British military effort to defeat the Arabi revolution.<sup>584</sup> Bedouin armies could provide valuable aid to either the British forces or to the revolutionary

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<sup>583</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 12 July 1882, 7. The *Daily Telegraph* went further and explained that with Egypt's position as halfway point between East and West, permitted no more dallying with an abnormal and illegal state of things..."

<sup>584</sup> Walter Besant, *The Life of Edward Henry Palmer*, 235. This book represents the officially sanctioned account of Professor Palmer's trek into the desert. When Mrs. Palmer changed her mind about having Lady Anne and Wilfrid help her find out the truth about her husband's expedition and death, it through Lord Northbrook's suggestion and Mr. Besant's interviews for this book that she was led to believe that the government would help her if she consented to their version of events.

forces led by Arabi. The Bedouins could also provide protection for the Suez Canal or they could participate in its blockade or destruction. The British hoped to make desert allies of the Bedouins, who were known generally to support Arabi, through the use of a credible Cambridge University academician, Edward Henry Palmer. Palmer, an Orientalist, linguist, and professor of Arabic at Cambridge, was recruited to lead the top-secret expedition. It was described publicly as both an academic research project in the Sinai, and also as a mission to help secure camels for the British war effort. Palmer wrote that he believed he could procure 500 camels for the British military. The imperial lifeline, the Suez Canal, would provide any excuse needed for a military mission in the area.

Professor Palmer had served as professor of eastern languages at Cambridge, but by 1881, he was employed as a journalist for *The Standard*.<sup>585</sup> His initial employment there was Palmer's first experience at incorporating politics with his lifelong scholarly pursuits. He had learned how to write journalistic articles by answering questions on eastern subjects, about which his academic study made him articulate. Palmer was popular with his co-workers and known for a cheerful attitude. He had recently published well-received articles about the east, which kept his name prominent during the tense period of Anglo-Egyptian contention.<sup>586</sup> In the months before his government expedition, he had also written articles for *The Times* and the *Saturday Review* on a wide variety of eastern subjects. Palmer's biographer, Sir Walter Besant, suggested that Palmer was at the happiest point in his life at the time he agreed to participate in what became his first

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<sup>585</sup> Sir Walter Besant, *The Life and Achievements of Edward Henry Palmer* (London: John Murray, 1883), 221.

<sup>586</sup> Walter Besant, *Life of Palmer*, 223.

and last secret government mission.<sup>587</sup> Palmer did not take long to make the decision to agree to Northbrook's plan for securing Bedouin assistance in the upcoming British war effort.

By the end of June, 1882, Northbrook and Palmer had completed discussions of their plans for the mission east of Suez, and Palmer was preparing for the journey. In July, Palmer and his expedition sailed to Alexandria, Egypt, and then to Jaffa, from where they traveled to Gaza, then across the Syrian frontier and Sinai to the Red Sea, on the east side of the Canal. They arrived on the east coast of the Red Sea, opposite Suez, on the first of August.<sup>588</sup> From there, they were camped at Moses Wells on 8 August. The story became complicated after this point because there were conflicting reports about where the party traveled, who they met along the way, and what actually happened. The expedition ultimately met with disaster and all of its members were found murdered in the desert. Initial reports by the British press suggested the Arabi-led nationalist revolutionaries of the murders; later reports implicated area Bedouins.<sup>589</sup>

Palmer's official biographer, Walter Besant, explained the goal of Palmer's mission by describing the British fear of "a religious war of unknown magnitude might arise out of it..." and further, that "no one knew at this time how far Turkey was intriguing to back up Arabi..."<sup>590</sup> Besant wrote from the perspective of a British writer who had interviewed British policy-makers after the Palmer tragedy had occurred. His description of British fear is incongruous with Lady Anne's description of Egyptian

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<sup>587</sup> Walter Besant, *Life of Palmer*, 227.

<sup>588</sup> *The Times*, 2 March 1883, p. 10, col. A.

<sup>589</sup> *The Times*, 26 October 1882, issue 30649, p. 3, col. A. Interestingly, among the personal items found that had belonged to the expedition, was a volume of Lord Byron's poetry that had belonged to Captain Gill.

<sup>590</sup> Walter Besant, *Life of Palmer*, 236.

administrative efforts at the time; Egyptian nationalists were trying to effectively run their new parliament and the government while the British allegedly feared Islamic insurrections and Suez Canal blockades. Besant wrote as though the Palmer expedition had not been planned until after Britain's bombardment of Alexandria, but Mrs. Palmer's documents from her husband suggested that the expedition was planned well in advance of the bombardment.<sup>591</sup> The timing of Palmer's mission also confirmed that when he visited the Blunts, "He asked for the letters to Egypt knowing he was going there not for the Standard but for the government which was hostile to all the people we cared for. Also he evidently used Wilfrid's name in the description making his position with the Bedouins safer. It however appears that the Turks most likely [compassed?] his death."<sup>592</sup>

Once Palmer and his party disappeared in the desert, the reasons for his mission became vitally important, which led to the confusing explanations in the newspapers. Eventually, the Palmer mission was described in the press as an effort to recruit tribal neutrality or loyalty on behalf of the British military.<sup>593</sup> Palmer's publications on the Arab world were well known, so the government believed that he would not arouse the suspicions of Egyptians or the Ottomans. Palmer would assume the disguise of a Syrian Arab and use his language skills to complete his ruse in the desert.<sup>594</sup>

The other members of the Palmer Expedition were Lieutenant Harold Charrington of the Royal Navy, who also donned local Arab disguise, but carried his naval uniform with his baggage; and Captain William Gill, Royal Engineers, who accompanied Palmer and Charrington for part of the expedition. Gill had a twofold purpose with the mission—

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<sup>591</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53918, 6 November 1882. Lady Anne was also trying to determine if Professor Palmer knew of his secret mission when he visited them on the pretense of scholarly research.

<sup>592</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53918, 6 November 1882.

<sup>593</sup> *The Times*, "Professor Palmer's Expedition," 2 March 1883, p. 10, col. A.

<sup>594</sup> *The Times*, 7 April 1883, p. 10, col. F.

to accompany Palmer and Charrington on the first part of their trip, and then detour to the telegraph lines which traversed the desert from Kantara to Suez, and destroy them.<sup>595</sup>

Mrs. Palmer, widow of the expedition leader, contacted Anne in the fall of 1882 asking for her help in discovering the truth of her late husband's mission.<sup>596</sup> As the mother of several children, Mrs. Palmer faced dire consequences from the loss of her husband's income following this untimely death. Mrs. Palmer suspected that the government intended to abandon her and her family to their fate. She knew from her husband's correspondence that he had been hired by the government for what proved to be his final expedition. She realized that the government, in particular the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Northbrook, did not want to provide any benefits for her and her family, hence his denial of her husband's employment.<sup>597</sup> Lady Anne read Northbrook's letter to Mrs. Palmer which stated, "As I was the means of sending him (and his band) on the expedition for which he so gallantly volunteered," and the rest of his letter was sympathy for Mrs. Palmer's loss. Northbrook not only did not offer sufficient compensation for the family, but he also advised Mrs. Palmer to take her family to Germany to live more economically. She could eventually sell her husband's books to increase her income, to which Mrs. Palmer told Anne, "I might as well sell his soul."<sup>598</sup> In her desperation, Mrs. Palmer sought the advice of the only other people she knew who

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<sup>595</sup> *The Times*, Friday, 2 March 1883, p. 10, col. A. The goal of the destruction of the telegraph lines was a lesson learned from the Sepoy Rebellion in India in 1857, in which telegraph lines aided the rebels in communicating with each other.

<sup>596</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53918, 5 November 1882.

<sup>597</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53918, 5 November 1882.

<sup>598</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53918, 5 November 1882.

had knowledge of the area in which her husband perished, and the political connections to help her.<sup>599</sup>

Mrs. Palmer knew of Lady Anne and Wilfrid Blunt's extensive travels and their close involvement in Egypt. She knew that Anne had sought her husband's help with translations a few months earlier; she knew that her husband had sought Wilfrid's letters of introduction for the former's Sinai expedition. With their shared experiences in mind, Mrs. Palmer asked Anne if she would read and copy Professor Palmer's journals and correspondence, and help plan Mrs. Palmer's appeal to the British government for assistance. Mrs. Palmer thus shared with Anne Professor Palmer's correspondence during his travels, and introduced Anne to the Charrington family, whose

Anne's journals record numerous meetings between herself and Mrs. Palmer, and the two women developed a friendship in the process. Mrs. Palmer wanted Anne and Wilfrid to write an article for a leading magazine as a method of exposing irregularities between Mr. Palmer's correspondence and the government's explanation of the events leading to the men's murders. When Anne compiled the information they would use for the article about the expedition, she and Wilfrid telegraphed Mrs. Palmer for her permission to publish the article as written. It took more time than usual for her to reply and when her reply came, it was a surprise. She wrote, "Nothing will I have published from my husband's letters...My friends will see to that" Anne responded in her journal,

Now of course she has a perfect right to withdraw her former proposal which was that Wilfrid should publish something of the sort because nobody else would have the courage to do so. She at that time told me that Mr. Besant wanted to keep

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<sup>599</sup> *The Times*, 2 March 1883, p. 10, col. A. It is interesting to note that Lady Anne approached Palmer on 26 April to help her with Arabic translations. Lady Anne was not pleased with his work, and found several mistakes in it.

everything for the memoir he is writing of Palmer but that he would be afraid of writing the truth and of offending the government.<sup>600</sup>

Mrs. Palmer had apparently agreed with her husband's biographer, Sir Walter Besant, to keep the journals private until Besant's book was published. Anne wrote later in the day:

There seems to be a mixture of the influence of Lord Northbrook...and that of Mr. Besant, each working for his own ends—the politician to conceal facts and the literary man to incorporate them into his book—which must be on the eve of coming out if it was to have been ready in January.<sup>601</sup>

Anne realized that her friendship with Mrs. Palmer was at an end, although she regretted the way it ended. She wrote in her journal, “As long as I could give her any help or comfort I would have willingly done so, and did—but now I not only believe that she has been ‘got hold of’ and estranged, but I think she is no longer in grief. I think she has forgotten her troubles in the interest of what is going forward.”<sup>602</sup>

Anne and Wilfrid had been monitoring the official account of the Palmer expedition as it was gradually exposed in the press. *The Times* published a full account of known facts, based in part on the correspondence between the British investigator, Colonel Warren, and a Sinai Sheykh, Musa Nassier. When the government's *Blue Book* came out, with the Palmer expedition in it, Anne wrote, “The Blue Book about the expedition has also come out but they have carefully prepared it leaving out this letter [from Colonel Warren, Royal Engineers and investigator of the murders] and other compromising things.”<sup>603</sup>

A break in the Palmer story had occurred when the Charrington family made an independent trip to the area of the murders, and conducted their own investigation. Their

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<sup>600</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53920, 7 March 1883.

<sup>601</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53920, 8 March 1883.

<sup>602</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53920, 8 March 1883. The emphasis is Anne's.

<sup>603</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53920, 2 March 1883.

evidence, which included Lieutenant Charrington's journals, indicated that the British government had indeed provided 20,000GBP in gold to Mr. Palmer as payment to the Bedouins for their loyalty. Palmer and his party disguised themselves as Arabs in an effort to deflect suspicion of a British mission among the Bedouins.<sup>604</sup>

Charrington had a parallel mission to cut the telegraph lines between Suez and Cairo so that Arabi would not be able to communicate with any of his allies in the area. Once he made the contact with Palmer and gave him the gold, Charrington embarked on his mission to blow up the telegraph lines. Charrington also appeared to provide himself as a decoy so that Palmer could proceed on his mission virtually unnoticed. Charrington was murdered near his destination, but initially Palmer's fate was uncertain because his remains had not been found. Colonel Charles Warren, of the Royal Engineers, led the initial search for the missing party and the investigation into their murder once the remains were located.<sup>605</sup>

Captain Gill's sister contacted the Blunts as well and when Wilfrid proposed to publish the article about the expedition, he had also contacted Miss Gill. Anne wrote that Wilfrid's publishing the facts of Gill's involvement was a "public duty, for the government misstatements are fraudulent now they are made on a question of supply."<sup>606</sup>

The Expedition, which became a scandal, involved the government's support of a disguised intelligence mission as well as the envelope of secrecy surrounding the deaths of the members of the party. Anne was indignant about the mission for the additional

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<sup>604</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53918, 12 November 1882, and other dates. There are many entries in Lady Anne's journals with Mrs. Palmer and the Charringtons, as the investigations progressed.

<sup>605</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53918, 17 November 1882. Mrs. Palmer took her husband's papers and letters to Lady Anne to copy. Anne "copied until 3a.m." See also, *The Times*, 26 October 1882, with the story of the fate of the members of the expedition.

<sup>606</sup> LAB Journals, add mss 53920, 8 March 1883.



reason that Mr. Palmer had visited Wilfrid on the pretext of embarking on an academic mission and asked for his letters of introduction to the sheikhs of the leading Bedouin tribes. He had also helped Anne translate correspondence from Egyptian revolutionaries. The Blunts' connections were used for illicit reasons, and used against their ally, Ahmed Arabi. For these reasons, along with the dramatic change, under obvious duress, in Mrs. Palmer's attitude toward Lady Anne and Wilfrid, along with other victims' family members, decided to keep the scandal alive in the press and work to expose the government's intrigue and apparent carelessness in regard to the lives of their secret agents. Anne supposed that Northbrook feared being exposed for the folly of the mission as much as for the duplicity of it.<sup>607</sup>

Lady Anne Blunt's brother, Ralph Noel, a peer in the House of Lords and known as Lord Wentworth, resolved to call into question the official government account of the Palmer Expedition.<sup>608</sup> Ralph's question had to be considered on the grounds of the rules between the houses of Parliament, because Ralph initially wanted to clarify a statement made by a minister in the House of Commons, Campbell-Bannerman. Campbell-Bannerman stated unequivocally that no payment in the amount of £20,000 was made to Professor Palmer. He stated that Admiral Hewett, at Suez, received that sum in order to pay an Indian contingent due to arrive in Suez. The Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords, Lord Redesdale, objected to Ralph's possible subversion of the rules in

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<sup>607</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53918, 7 December 1882, 20 December 1882, and other journal entries. Also, add mss 53920, 14 March 1882. The Charringtons became friendly with Lady Anne and Wilfrid through the ordeal of discovering the truth of their loved one's secret mission. The Charringtons pursued their own investigation, and discovered that the European community and the consul at Suez were shocked and appalled at the "rashness and folly" of Palmer's mission. Palmer never contacted the consul or sought local information.

<sup>608</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53920, 13 March 1883. Anne, Ralph, the William Gregorys, and Algernon Bourke, all discussed the approach Ralph should take in his House of Lords speech.

raising such a question in the other house of Parliament. Lord Northbrook and the Marquess of Salisbury both supported Ralph's right to raise a question in regard to a statement by a minister; questioning a debate in the other house was a different matter.<sup>609</sup>

With enough support to proceed with his questions of Campbell-Bannerman's statement, Ralph made two points. One was that Campbell-Bannerman originally stated that Professor Palmer traveled in the Sinai as an Englishman under his own name, only to refute that statement later and state that Palmer wore Bedouin dress on his mission. Ralph's second question was in regard to the payment of Bedouins. Campbell-Bannerman "expressed surprise at such a statement being made, and could, he said, only explain it by the writer [Ralph, Lord Wentworth] having had access to the confidential Papers of the Admiralty." Ralph continued to describe Campbell-Bannerman's explanation of the Palmer mission by relating that:

The honorable Gentleman again denied that Professor Palmer or any of his party, had been furnished with any money to buy the allegiance of anybody; and, lastly, he said, in regard to the assertion that Professor Palmer received from Captain Gill, at Suez, £20,000 in gold for the Bedouins, there was no truth in it; that neither Captain Gill nor Professor Palmer received any such sum for that or any other purpose; that Admiral Hewett, at Suez, had asked for a sum of money to prepare for the Indian Contingent as soon as it arrived. ....that he could not too strongly assert that the sending of that money had nothing whatever to do with Professor Palmer's Mission, beyond the fact that £3,000 was subsequently given to him by Admiral Hewett for the hire of camels.<sup>610</sup>

Ralph gave a detailed account of Campbell-Bannerman's denial of Professor Palmer's payment or of his official capacity as an intelligence agent in the desert.

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<sup>609</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53920, 15 March 1883. The *Daily News* had a short notice that "Lord Wentworth will ask a question about Palmer." Later in this same entry, Anne noted that Ralph's support in the House of Lords would be Lord Dunroven, "who does not care for the government."

<sup>610</sup> House of Lords Debate, 16 March 1883, vol 277, cc672-83.

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1883/mar/16/motion-for-papers>, accessed 4/11/2011.

Ralph's adversary on the floor in the House of Lords was Lord Northbrook, who consistently claimed that there were no monies paid by the Crown to Mr. Palmer, and that there was only a mention of the idea of paying the Bedouins in Gill's correspondence. Northbrook addressed Ralph's three main points in a detailed rebuttal, stating:

With regard to the first point,..I myself gave those instructions...before the attack on Alexandria...Professor Palmer, with great public spirit and great gallantry, at once offered his services on this difficult duty [serving as translator with the Bedouin tribes and assessing their sentiments in case of war with Egypt]....I can now dispose of the second point...Professor Palmer and his party did not travel in disguise in the ordinary acceptance of the term, for it was well known that Professor Palmer was an Englishman....Now, as to the other point,...the reported expenditure of £20,000...The money was not paid to Professor Palmer; [it was] expended for the use of the East Indian Squadron in Egyptian waters...<sup>611</sup>

Northbrook's explanation was long and detailed, and his speech exuded the confidence of one who knew that no one had access to any other opposing information that could possibly be used against his own argument.

Northbrook also took the opportunity to address Wilfrid Blunt's activities in Egypt on Arabi's behalf, in a context designed to remind his colleagues of Ralph's connection to Blunt. Northbrook said, in the same speech explaining Professor Palmer's mission:

I can quite understand that Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, who was one of Arabi's allies during his rebellion, would think it a most abominable thing for any money to have been paid to Bedouins by us for any services; but, as we desired to dispose of Arabi, I should not have hesitated for a moment to authorize expenditure for the purpose of doing anything I considered desirable to protect the Suez Canal, and dispose of Arabi and his rabble.<sup>612</sup>

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<sup>611</sup> House of Lords Debate, 16 March 1883, vol 277, cc672-83.  
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1883/mar/16/motion-for-papers>, accessed 4/11/2011.

<sup>612</sup> House of Lords Debate, 16 March 1883, vol 277, cc672-83.  
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1883/mar/16/motion-for-papers>, accessed 4/11/2011. See also, Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia*.

Northbrook likely thought that this reminder of Blunt's opposition to British policy would rouse patriotic support among the Lords and deflect the suspicion present in the questions being asked.

Northbrook cited Captain Gill's journal and said, "There is nothing in it to the effect that £20,000 was actually given to Professor Palmer. There is, however, a sentence to the effect that Professor Palmer had authority to spend £20,000."<sup>613</sup> Northbrook used Blunt's name again in the context of stating that both Mrs. Palmer and Captain Gill's brother had contacted him, complaining of Blunt's use of their deceased loved ones' papers. This statement was Northbrook's effort to decline the House of Lords' request for him to produce the papers upon which he based his arguments. The Lords wanted the papers placed in the public record.

Ralph commented on Northbrook's effort to attack Blunt and disparage him for his supposed use of the Palmer and Gill journals. Ralph then explained to the House of Lords that five months earlier, Mrs. Palmer had taken her husband's journals to Blunt, asking him to prepare an article for *The Fortnightly Review* or *The Nineteenth Century*. As Ralph offered to read passages from the Palmer journals, "both on this point and on the other too, on which the information supplied by the noble Earl was quite inconsistent with the facts as made known in the journals."<sup>614</sup> As Ralph began to read, Earls Stanhope and Granville asked him if he had Mrs. Palmer's permission to share her husband's journals. Ralph told them that he did not have Mrs. Palmer's permission, but that it was his duty to defend Blunt, "from any evidence in his possession, to give their Lordships

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<sup>613</sup> House of Lords Debate, 16 March 1883, vol 277, cc672-83.

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1883/mar/16/motion-for-papers>, accessed 4/11/2011

<sup>614</sup> House of Lords Debate, 16 March 1883, vol 277, cc672-83.

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1883/mar/16/motion-for-papers>, accessed 4/11/2011

accurate information.” After some discussion, Ralph was allowed to state facts “within his knowledge.” Ralph then told the Lords:

It was a fact that Mr. Palmer travelled as a Syrian officer and as a Mussulman in the Desert, and the war had actually commenced before he went into the desert, for he received the news of the bombardment of Alexandria before he had gone far from Gaza. He wished to offer an explanation as to Mr. Blunt’s authority from Mrs. Palmer. It appeared from a journal kept by Lady Anne Blunt that Mrs. Palmer had called upon her, and left the documents with her, for the purposes of extracts being made for a magazine article. They were given for the distinct purpose of having the truth made known, and there was no violation of confidence on the part of Mr. Blunt. He believed the noble Earl would regret denying the existence of the £20,000, for it was absolutely confirmed by the journal of Captain Gill. He should take another opportunity of bringing the matter before the House.<sup>615</sup>

Anne was surprised, “thunderstruck,” at Ralph’s use of her papers as a reference. Above all, she regretted her personal journals being used against Mrs. Palmer, even if it was an indirect blow, but she wrote that the most important thing was to tell the truth and to make the truth known. She did not believe the government should be allowed to succeed in its deception.<sup>616</sup> Anne also knew that Mrs. Palmer’s position in the matter was tenuous—the widow needed government assistance and could not risk Lord Northbrook’s wrath if she provided evidence that would compromise him. Ralph’s use of Anne’s evidence provided proof of Professor Palmer’s actions on behalf of the government, and led to Mrs. Palmer’s receiving the financial aid she needed for her family and herself.

Wilfrid unintentionally provided intelligence to the British government in the context of the tragic Palmer Expedition. After learning of the Bedouins’ recruitment, Blunt lamented his inadvertent support of the British military when his own name was

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<sup>615</sup> House of Lords Debate, 16 March 1883, vol 277, cc672-83.

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1883/mar/16/motion-for-papers>, accessed 4/11/2011

<sup>616</sup> LAB journals, add 53920, 18 March 1883.

used by the Palmer expedition as an introduction and reference with the Sinai tribes to gain Bedouin loyalty. Wilfrid wrote later that he was “hoist with my own petard.”<sup>617</sup> Anne and Wilfrid, with justice as their goal and with Ralph’s help, tried to mitigate the effects of their part in the Palmer expedition’s tragedy by working to expose the government’s folly. Modern accounts of the expedition include the reported bribery amount, as well as Lord Northbrook’s participation in coordinating the mission,<sup>618</sup> but it is likely that this mission would have remained secret had Lady Anne’s journal not been used as a public source of confirmation of Mrs. Palmer’s early efforts to have the story published.

The Palmer expedition and its connection with Lady Anne Blunt provide a metaphor for the importance of Lady Anne’s cosmopolitan worldview. In comparison with Lady Anne’s exhaustive descriptions of the Arabs she met all across North Africa, Sinai, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and Mesopotamia, none of her remarks reflect the negative, critical view presented by Palmer during this one expedition to Sinai. He described the village of Nakhel as “a wretched square fort on the midst of a glaring desert plain...Here a few miserable soldiers are maintained by the Egyptian Government...” Later, he described his and his party’s reception: “We were received by the captain of the guard, a dark noseless Arab...none of the soldiers were in uniform, and they were as scoundrelly a set as one could well conceive.”<sup>619</sup> While Palmer’s descriptions might have been accurate at the time, they do not reflect a sympathetic worldview such as that with which Anne consistently wrote. Palmer also wrote that he believed he could amass a fighting force of

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<sup>617</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Secret History*, 117.

<sup>618</sup> Elizabeth Baigent, ‘Palmer, Edward Henry (1840–1882)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

<sup>619</sup> Walter Besant, *Life of Palmer*, 238.

50,000 men, a number that Besant quotes as well; Anne doubted such a large force, as did Wilfrid.<sup>620</sup> The disparity between the views of Arabs and the facts on the ground, offer some explanation of the misinformation within official accounts, and the depth of knowledge acquired by Lady Anne and Wilfrid during their travels.

The Palmer Expedition and its demise exposed one of the British government's early attempts at intelligence gathering and bribery through secret missions. The tragic end of the mission served to galvanize support for the British war effort by demonizing the Arabs who reportedly murdered the party. The tragedy also served to ultimately expose the expedition's true purpose. The effort of government officials to use a civilian to bribe Sinai tribes, then deny the mission and avoid compensation of bereaved families, showed the depth of British concern at the success of Egyptian military opposition. It also revealed the ability of a small coterie of jingoist Members of Parliament to conduct, or at least influence, policy without consulting their fellow members. The concept of having an empire to defend, not just a nation to defend, was an emerging concept that gained momentum in the late nineteenth century. The Palmer Expedition and its secret mission in the Sinai foretold the burgeoning aura of British agents and secret missions that would dominate the counter-espionage genre in literary circles and the British mind by the turn of the century. By 1903, imperial defense and intelligence services were combined to form MI5 and MI6.<sup>621</sup> With the publication in 1900 of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, the concept of ever-present British spies was confirmed in imperial consciousness. Lady Anne's journals regularly mention spies in Egypt, and their presence was a significant deterrent to any revolutionary ideas that the Blunts or Egyptian nationalists might have

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<sup>620</sup> LAB journals, add mss 53918, 18 November 1882.

<sup>621</sup> Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm, The Authorized History of MI5* (London: Penguin, 2010), 3.

considered. The Palmer Expedition and its aftermath represented a turning point for Lady Anne's view of the character of government and its responsibility to its citizens. It also represented a transition in the government's role in imperial intelligence gathering as a component of defense.

The newspaper articles written six months after the failed expedition report the true nature of it, unlike the earlier ones. They describe the encounter of Professor Palmer and his first party of Bedouin "chiefs" as they made an initial fourteen-day journey to Suez, during which Palmer made arrangements to procure the services of 50,000 men for £25,000.<sup>622</sup> The press accounts would have remained under Northbrook's influence had Lady Anne and Wilfrid, with the help of Anne's brother, Ralph, not exposed the true nature of the mission.

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<sup>622</sup> *The Times*, 2 March 1883, p. 10, col. A.



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