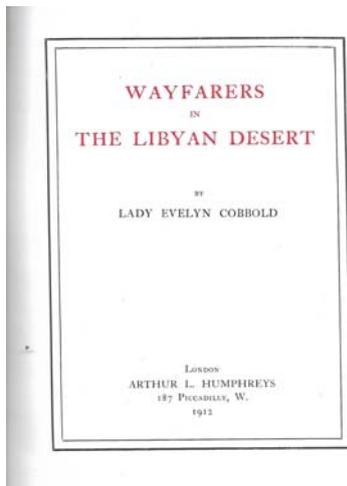


## WAYFARERS IN THE LIBYAN DESERT

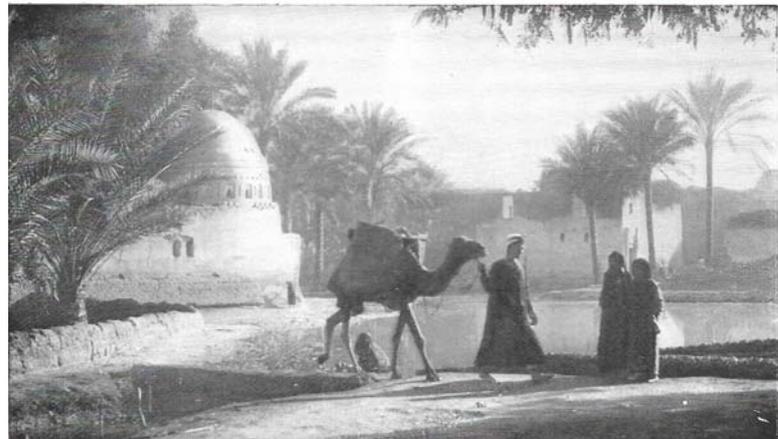
March 2017

It is very unusual in publishing circles for the same text to be published the same year under the same title by two different authors, but this is what happened in 1912 with *Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert*. Many family members will be familiar with this first book by **Lady Evelyn Cobbold** (#308 on the family tree) 1867-1963, (there were two more to follow) which is, as the title suggests a travelogue, presented in diary form, of her expedition with Frances Alexander between 23<sup>rd</sup> February and 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1911. (This is more than 3 years before her famous meetings with T E Lawrence in Sinai in 1914 and Cairo in 1915).

Lady Evelyn's version was published in London by Arthur L. Humphreys. The Trust has known that another version was published in America but had not seen it until a copy was acquired this month. This was published by G.P.Putnam's Sons – The Knickerbocker Press – in New York also in 1912. Although differences in the text itself are mainly cosmetic there are substantial differences in pagination, chapter titles and in picture selection and captioning, presumably to make it more acceptable to trans-Atlantic readers.



English Version



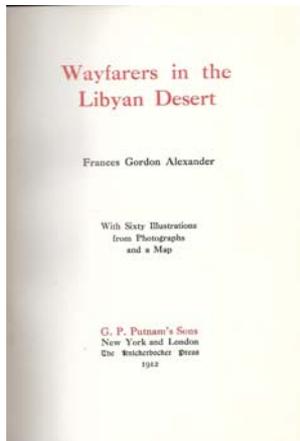
Frontispiece – English

The other mystery is who was Frances Gordon Alexander and how did she and Lady Evelyn know each other well enough to undertake such an expedition; and did they stay in touch afterwards? Our researches, such as they are, suggest that Frances was a member of New York society who had married Allen Gouverneur Wellman the year before the expedition. The American version was sufficiently well regarded to be taken into the Library of Congress. The Trust would love to hear from anyone who has light to shed on this matter.

This small extract from the opening chapter of Evelyn's book gives a flavour of their experience. *We are two pilgrims, seeking warmth and sunshine, only too anxious to shed the dust of Cairo from our feet. With joyous anticipation we enter the motor that whirls us along the shaded avenue to Mena, that long road where East and West jostle. Behind the great hotel, on the edge of the desert, a medley of Bedouins, camels and donkeys are waiting – the little world that will convey us into the unknown desert.*

*Our caravan consists of twelve baggage camels, two dromedaries, a sand-cart and pony, and five riding donkeys, while our Arab retinue number twenty-three, without including our dragoman, Fadlallah, and his small son Toulba, who soon deservedly earns the name of Terrible. We have four sleeping tents for our maids and ourselves, kitchen and dining tents, and a smaller one, carried on a dromedary, to be pitched during the day, while we take lunch and siesta.*

Lady Evelyn was 43 at that time.



American Version



Frontispiece - American