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Sir Richard Francis Burton

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SIR RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON

An Honors Essay
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

by
Kenneth Foushee
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Sir Richard Francis Burton was a unique man. While there were more prominent soldiers, explorers, writers, and scientists than he during his lifetime, no one was an expert in as many fields as he. During his lifetime, Burton embraced many trades, mastering one and then moving on to master another. His mind was always working to absorb, analyze, and assimilate every word he read or heard. He visited and studied on five continents, fluently spoke several ancient languages and fifteen dialects, published forty-three volumes on his explorations and travels, wrote over a hundred journal articles, and translated eighteen volumes of the Arabian Nights, six volumes of Portuguese literature, two volumes of Latin poetry, and four volumes of folklore from Africa and India.

Burton was not an armchair scholar, as were many British anthropologists of his time. Rather, Burton immersed himself in the customs, language, and culture of whatever group he encountered. In Life of Sir Richard Burton, Fawn Bartle states, "Burton was not a disinterested observer, but an active participant in every society he entered."

"He seemed to be a true man of the Renaissance. He was soldier, explorer, ethnologist, archaeologist, poet, translator, and one of the two or three great linguists of his time. He was also an amateur physician, botanist, zoologist, and geologist, and incidentally, a celebrated swordsman and superb raconteur."  

Sir Richard Francis Burton was a unique man. While there were more prominent soldiers, explorers, writers, and scientists than he during his lifetime, no one was an expert in as many fields as he. During his lifetime, Burton embraced many trades, mastering one and then moving on to master another. His mind was always working to absorb, analyze, and assimilate every word he read or heard. He visited and studied on five continents, fluently learned twenty-five languages and fifteen dialects, published forty-three volumes on his explorations and travels, wrote over a hundred journal articles, and translated eighteen volumes of the Arabian Nights, six volumes of Portuguese literature, two volumes of Latin poetry, and four volumes of folklore from Africa and India.

Burton was not an armchair scholar, as were many British social anthropologists of his time. Rather, Burton immersed himself in the customs, language, and culture of whatever group he studied. His accounts of the Sindhi, the Moslems, the Normans, and others were firsthand accounts of these differing cultures. He was a true man of the Renaissance. He was soldier, explorer, ethnologist, archaeologist, poet, translator, and one of the two or three great linguists of his time. He was also an amateur physician, botanist, zoologist, and geologist, and incidentally, a celebrated swordsman and superb raconteur.  

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was studying. His accounts of the Sindh, the Moslems, the Hindus, the Mormons, and others were firsthand accounts of these differing cultures. Burton differed from contemporary British scholars in another, more important, way as well. He embraced each culture he studied and made it his own. He did not deride a culture when it differed from English custom. In fact, he often adopted customs that he found meaningful from other cultures and abandoned the English counterpart. This willingness to adapt and his derision of the hypocrisy of the British colonial system endeared him to many English scientists and scholars. These same qualities, however, earned him the hatred and jealousy of many British government officials, and Army officers. It was these angered officials, and later angered rival scholars, who continually placed obstacles in the path of Burton’s career.

It is the purpose of this paper to detail the life, accomplishments and controversies of Sir Richard Francis Burton. While his accomplishments are of tremendous importance, his connection to them is often forgotten. While his life has been the subject of numerous biographies, these were almost always written by either adoring friends and relatives or by angered contemporaries in an attempt to discredit Burton and his accomplishments. Thus, this paper will attempt to put the achievements of Richard Burton in perspective, and in doing so, acknowledge Burton’s contributions to many fields of science and scholarship.
Richard Francis Burton was born March 19, 1821 in Torquay, England, the first son of Martha Baker and Joseph Netterville Burton. Martha Baker Burton was the daughter of an English country gentleman and his Scottish wife. Georgiana Stisted, Burton's niece, described Martha Burton as "a gentle and intensely unselfish woman," who was "tall, graceful and attractive." 2 Burton himself rarely wrote about his mother, but when he did, usually used such terms as plain, thin, and delicate. While Stisted insists that Burton adored his mother, Burton's lack of written comments about her would indicate otherwise. In fact, Burton often complained of a lack of affection from his mother. In a comparison of Hindu and European mothers, Burton makes clear his feeling that European mothers, especially his own, had a lack of affection for their children:

"The [European] parents are engrossed by other cares--the search for riches or the pursuit of pleasure--during the infancy of their offspring. In the troublesome days of childhood the boy is consigned to the nursery, or let loose to pass his time with his fellows as best he can; then youth comes accompanied by an exile, to school and college...there is little community of interests and opinions between parent and child--the absence of it is the want of a great tie." 3

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While Burton felt neglected by his mother, she loved her children dearly. She expressed her love for them by a severe lack of discipline and overcompensating compassion when they misbehaved. Burton misinterpreted this looseness of authority as aloofness.

In contrast with the kindness of Martha Burton, Joseph was stern and often held his children in contempt. Joseph Burton was born of English and Irish-French descent. He joined the British army at the age of seventeen and rose to the rank of Lieutenant-colonel. In the days of bought commissions, this would suggest that the Burtons possessed a considerable amount of wealth at one time. 4 Richard Burton wrote that his father was considered a handsome man "of moderate height, dark hair, sallow skin, high nose, and piercing black eyes."—characteristics Burton shared with his father. Other than his appearance, there was little to admire about Joseph Burton. He was a wild speculator on the stock exchange and lazily lived on his wife's inheritance after he left the army. Joseph was also enamored with quackery. A hypochondriac who despised doctors, he spent large sums of money on miracle cures. This appalled Burton, an amateur medical student, who realized the waste of his father's body and money. As a father, Joseph was harsh and demanding. Burton later complained of his father's constant "scolding and threatening" and, "the usual parental brutality." 5

While Burton found himself separated from his parents, he was closely bonded to his brother Edward and his sister Maria. The

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4. Brodie, Devil, p. 27.
5. quoted in Ibid., p. 30.
family lived in France during the children's early lives. The stranded without any English-speaking peers, Richard and Edward soon became good friends as well as brothers. The lack of discipline by Martha left Richard and Edward with much free time in which to explore. Left with such free time, and only one another as company, the two soon became young ruffian comrades-at-arms. The boys frequently went into Tours to steal food and to fight with the local boys. Richard, who was both older and more competent, took charge of the relationship and led the ever-willing Edward into many adventures.

Burton found comfort in the company of his sister Maria. Throughout his life, Burton would visit his sister before and after each of his travels. "He kept up a regular correspondence with his sister, whom he tenderly loved..." wrote Georgiana Stisted, "A fortnight seldom passed without a letter in his quaint little handwriting." Maria was a calming influence on the "Ruffian Dick." It was in her company that Burton found solace and contentment, as well as a willing nurse during his frequent bouts of illness.

The Burtons had moved to Tours shortly after Richard's birth. While the family made frequent trips back to England, Tours was the Burtons' home until 1830—when revolution and a cholera epidemic forced their flight. The Burtons then returned to Brighton, England and Richard and Edward were enrolled in school. He sent Richard to Oxford and Edward to Cambridge.

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an obscure preparatory school in nearby Richmond. Both of the boys, however, hated England. The bad weather, cold seas, and smoke filled air made them detest Brighton. The influence of their French upbringing had taken its toll:

"Everything appeared so small, so prim, so mean, the little one-familied houses contrasting in such a melancholy way with the big buildings of Tours and Paris. We revolted against the coarse and half-cooked food, and accustomed to the excellent Bordeaux of France, we found port, sherry, and beer like strong medicine; the bread, all crumb and crust, appeared to be half baked, and the milk meant chalk and water."  

The boarding school at Richmond was even less to their liking. Richard and Edward stood apart from the other boys and were continually engaged in fighting one or another of their schoolmates. As Burton said, "I was in a perpetual scene of fights; at one time I had thirty-two affairs of honour to settle." A measles epidemic hit the school after the boys' first year at Richmond. Joseph, even less fond of England than his sons, withdrew them from the school and returned to France.

From 1830 to 1840, the Burtons moved fourteen times: from France to England, back to France, through France to Italy, and to numerous Italian cities. The frequent moves added to the instability of Burton's life and he became ever wilder and more undisciplined. Finally, in 1840, Joseph Burton had had enough of his two sons. He sent Richard to Oxford and Edward to Cambridge,
each to be trained for the clergy. After an initially rough start, Burton soon became popular at Oxford. His reputation as a prankster and as a cogent speaker won him invitations to dinner with the Duke of Brunswick and many other prominent persons.

While his personal life flourished, his scholarship floundered. During his travels in Europe, Burton learned of his talents at languages. He had already learned French fluently and had also learned several French dialects. In Italy, he learned Italian as well as Romainc and Anglican Latin, classical and modern Greek. His vast language comprehension, however, was to be a detriment to him at Oxford. When he tried to earn fellowships in Greek and Latin, he was turned down. He defeated himself in oral examinations with his own extensive knowledge. By trying to show his knowledge of both classical and modern Greek, he was turned down for making gross grammatical errors. The instructors would only accept classical Greek translation. Modern Greek was, to them, an aberration. The story was much the same when he applied for the Latin fellowship. While Burton found Anglicanized Latin anachronistic, it was the only translation of the language that the examiners would accept. When Burton reverted to Romainc Latin, the examiners promptly failed him. Stunned by his failure in the classical languages, Burton turned to mastering Arabic. He began by self-teaching and was aided by his friend Don Pascual de Gayangos. Burton thrust himself into the mastery of Arabic and, after several months of intense study, Burton had learned the language well.

The failure to achieve a fellowship soured Burton on Oxford...
and on organized religion, the profession forced upon him by his father. Burton soon drifted into agnosticism, and later Atheism. This hatred would be especially evidenced in his future writings against the Catholic church. His father, nonetheless, refused to withdraw him. Consequently, Burton conspired to have himself dismissed. After holding huge wine parties, circulating caricatures of instructors, and satirizing the dons to no avail, Burton happened upon a plan. He openly defied a University rule by convincing several fellow students to attend a forbidden steeplechase. When the violators were caught and brought before Oxford officials, Burton argued that he and his friends were innocent of any wrongdoing. The officials were outraged by such a brash display and summarily expelled Burton. Burton's departure was as outlandish as his arguing with the University officials. Burton left Oxford in a horse-drawn carriage, but not before he had driven over the campus flowerbeds and loudly tooted on a tin horn throughout the town.

Burton's youth shaped much of his later life. His early life in Tours made him a stranger to England. The French, however, did not accept him because of his English heritage. Thus, Burton found himself, "a waif, a stray...a blaze of light without a focus." This disassociation with any home, coupled with the frequent moves of his youth, left Burton with a wandering spirit. This spirit would take him from India to Iceland, from Argentina to Zanzibar, from Mecca to Salt Lake


10. quoted in Brodie, 34.
City.

Joseph Burton, hated physician, was born in 1842 shortly after his father was invalided. Burton was ever active. Joseph Burton hated physicians and relied instead on "miracle" cures. Richard, on the other hand, studied medicine and held friendships with numerous physicians. Joseph and Richard shared similar physical features, but Richard habitually wore everchanging combinations of beards and mustaches in an effort to hide his likeness to his father.

Burton's intense dislike of his father is further evidenced by the almost complete absence of comments about Joseph in Burton's writings.

**Footnotes**


11. Ibid., 28.
Burton enlisted in the Bombay Army in 1842 shortly after his expulsion from Oxford. His behavior incensed his father. Nevertheless, Joseph Burton paid 500 pounds to buy a commission for his son. Joseph’s anger was lessened, however, by events in India. In January 1842, Afghan rebels massacred 700 British soldiers, 4000 Indian troops, and 12000 civilians in an attack on Kabul. The British public demanded retribution and enlistment in the Army soared. Thus, Burton’s enlistment was portrayed by his family as a case of youthful nationalism and his transgressions at Oxford were forgotten.

Burton prepared for a career in the Army. While he fully intended to live a lifetime of military service, he wished to advance on his own merit. While Joseph Burton counted a General and a judge in Calcutta among his relatives, Burton refused to use these influences to attain rank. Rather, Burton wished to attain his goal through individual achievement. This achievement, Burton thought, could be attained in one of two ways, either:

"getting a flesh wound, cutting down a brace of natives and doing something eccentric, so that your name may creep into a dispatch. The other path, the study of languages, is a rugged and tortuous one, still you have only to plod steadily along its length, and, sooner or later, you must come to a staff appointment."

13. quoted in Brodie, 48.
The first avenue, however, was cut off. By October 28, 1842, when Burton arrived in Bombay, the Afghans had been defeated and the war was over. Burton then fell headlong into the study of Hindustani—the most widely spoken dialect in India. He had begun its study through self-teaching on the voyage to Bombay. Once there, he immediately sought, and found, Doshabhai Sohrabji, the finest language teacher in Bombay. Sohrabji was impressed with Burton’s language aptitude and accepted him as a student. 

Burton found Bombay loathsome. The filth of the city dispelled all the romantic notions Burton had envisioned about the East. After a few nights in the city, Burton became irrevocably appalled at the lack of privacy and poor sanitary conditions and moved to a private sanatorium until he was assigned to his post in Baroda. He began his assignment by trying to imitate the other officers in his regiment, the 18th Bombay Native Infantry. He hired a dozen servants and took in a bubu, or native woman who served as head of the household and temporary concubine.

Burton soon found, however, the life of a British officer unappealing. He despised beer—the staple beverage of the British officer. The band concerts, billiard tables, and picnics held in an effort to keep the officers ‘civilized’, Burton found intolerable. Big-game hunting seemed boring and without merit. Burton soon began to find himself increasingly isolated from the


other officers. His problems were compounded by his language studies. Most officers scoffed at those who attempted to speak the language of the natives. Burton offended the officers greatly, for in addition to learning the language, he actually fraternized with the locals. Such unorthodox behavior soon earned Burton the name "white nigger" in the officer's club of the 18th regiment.  

Language study, however, proved to be a boon for Burton. In April 1843, Burton was sent to Bombay for language testing in Hindustani. Major-General Vans-Kennedy, a brilliant linguist, was the administrator of the test. He required the translation of two books and a writing sample. In addition, Burton and eleven other applicants were required to converse in Hindustani and to write a paper in the language. Burton finished well ahead of the others tested and was soon appointed Regimental Interpreter, his first staff appointment.  

Heartened by this success, Burton returned to Baroda and enthusiastically studied Gujarati—the local Hindu dialect, and began to learn Sanscrit. Seven months later, he again travelled to Bombay to be tested by Vans-Kennedy. His main opponent in the Gujarati test was Lieutenant C.P. Rigby who had distinguished himself as the finest linguist in the Bombay Army. Burton, however, easily outscored him in the testing, and earned Rigby's lifelong animosity.  

17. Farwell, 32.  
In 1844, the 18th regiment was sent to the Sindh as part of a peacekeeping force. After ten years of guerilla warfare, General Sir Charles Napier had subjugated and annexed the 50,000 square miles that compose the Sindh valley in 1843. Napier then proceeded to pacify the natives and bring the local princes under British control. Napier was unlike other conquerors in that he had severe doubts concerning his right to conquer.

On the trip from Baroda to the Sindh, Burton met Captain Walter Scott of the Bombay Engineers. Scott, a professional surveyor and amateur linguist, was travelling to the Sindh to survey the lower half of the region. Burton and Scott soon became fast friends. Their common hobbies and gifts for conversation made the long trip from Baroda to Karachi much less tedious. As the trip progressed, Burton became interested in the art of surveying and Scott promised to add Burton to his staff of assistants.

The inhabitants of the Sindh obviously hated the British occupation. The filth in Karachi made Bombay seem sanitary. Burton soon found himself longing for a transfer. Burton's transfer finally came through, and he joined Scott in Gharra--forty miles south of Karachi. For the next nine months, Burton was Scott's official translator. Burton found the Sindh depressing, "a mild Miltonic hell." The depression, however, was preferable to the decay of Karachi. In his spare time, Burton

20. Farwell, 33.
studied the Sindhi language in depth. By the end of his
assignment with Scott, he had mastered the Sindhi and Persian
languages and had begun the study of Punjabi.

The job at Gharra was fairly undemanding. Burton quickly
learned the basics of surveying and was of tremendous help to
Scott. In his spare time, Burton engaged in cock-fighting with
the other officers. He had his own bird, an ill-tempered rooster
named Bhujang, the Sindhi word for "dragon." 22

In late 1844, Burton was "borrowed" from the 18th Infantry by
Napier's command in Karachi. Napier saw the promise of Burton's
abilities and commissioned Burton to work for him in Intelligence.
Burton broke with the traditional Intelligence method of paying
infringes. In 1843, Burton then made his report to the Governor
that he "passed away many an evening in the bazaar and talked
by smearing henna on his face, wearing false hair and beards, and
dressing in expensive native clothing. He then appeared in the
Sind bazaars disguised as Mizra Abdullah, a rich merchant. He
often set up a shop in the bazaar selling various fabrics or
foods. He would then sit for days in the bazaar and question all
visitors to his shop about the various activities in the city. 23

Burton's methods provided results. He informed Napier of
several transgressions. He was the first to find evidence that
poverty-stricken substitutes were often executed in place of rich
criminals sentenced to death. Burton also brought Napier
information concerning infanticide, uxoricide, and opium use in
Karachi. Napier was impressed by Burton's successes and sent

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Burton and Scott on a diplomatic tour of Sindh provinces in order to listen for signs of rebellion. The two men were almost universally despised on their trip and, were it not for the protection of Napier, would have likely been killed by one of the Amirs. At last, despite medical advice, Burton’s health slowly improved. Upon his return to Karachi, Burton was called upon by Napier for another intelligence mission. Napier was alarmed by rumors that several homosexual brothels were operating in the city and were servicing his troops. Once more, Burton donned his disguise and entered the city. Upon investigation, he indeed found three such brothels, in which eunuchs and young boys performed services for hire. In 1845, Burton then made his report to Napier stating that he, “passed away many an evening in the townlet and visited all the porneia and obtained the fullest details which were duly dispatched to the Government house.”  

Burton’s report was explicitly detailed. Napier was shocked at the findings and quickly shut down the brothels. He did not believe that Burton was guilty of “Le Vice.” For Burton’s protection, however, Napier filed Burton’s report and never sent a copy to the Bombay authorities. The report would, nevertheless, come back to haunt Burton two years later.

A cholera epidemic hit the Sindh in July 1846, killing over sixty thousand people. While the number of British soldiers killed was small, the number contracting the disease was large. In September, Burton fell gravely ill. So ill, in fact, that he was granted a two-year convalescent leave at a sanatorium south of

24. Ibid., 66.
Bomba'y on February 20, 1847. Burton’s stay at the sanatorium little improved his health. While there, he contracted rheumatic ophthalma. This new ailment coupled with an improper diet and no proper medication left Burton almost blind. His condition finally broke after several months and he began to study Telugu and Portuguese as soon as he was able to read. In October 1847, after only six months of his leave, he left the sanatorium and travelled to Bombay. There he took an official examination in Persian and finished first in a field of thirty applicants.

Burton returned to his 18th Regiment post in November and submitted his first written works—two pieces of Sindh ethnology. He submitted them to the Government office for potential publication in early 1848. These innocent ethnographies of the Sindh, however, would eventually damage Burton’s military career. While Burton was on sick leave, Napier had resigned his command and returned to England. He also left all his files for his replacement. When Burton sent his manuscripts for publication, someone in the command office proceeded to look through Burton’s records and found the report on the Karachi brothels. The report was sent with the ethnographies to Bombay and a request that Burton be removed from service.

25. Farwell, 38.
27. Farwell, 41.
Burton was not asked to resign because he had, after all, been following orders. Still, the spectre of homosexuality was hung over Burton's name. While homosexuality was common in England, Burton had written about its existence without denouncing it. On the contrary, his graphic, clinical descriptions of the actions at the brothels indicated that he might have actually taken part in "Le Vice." After several fruitless attempts at advancement and transfer, Burton conceded that his military future in India was lost. The stress of the situation aggravated his ophthalmia and he became desperately sick. On May 13, 1849, while still nominally a member of the Bombay army, Burton—half blind and deathly ill, sailed with one servant to England. 29
Burton arrived in London, then quickly travelled to Pisa in August 1849 to stay with his parents. His sister Maria and her two daughters were also staying in Pisa. She had married Lieutenant-General Sir Henry William Stisted in 1845, but had decided not to travel to India with him. Upon Burton's arrival, Maria dedicated herself to directing his recovery. After a brief visit with his parents, Burton, Maria, her two daughters, an English maid and Burton's servant, Allahdad, travelled to England for a cousin's wedding.

While in England, Burton fell in love with Elizabeth Stisted, one of his cousins. Burton's future looked slim, however, and her parents blocked the relationship. Disheartened, Burton moved to Boulogne taking his mother, sister, and nieces with him. In Boulogne, he was happy. He was very popular with the women there and engaged in numerous affairs. At this time he was to see, but not to meet Isabel Arundell, the woman who would later become his wife. Isabel had once seen Burton when he was courting her cousin Louisa and had fallen madly in love with him. Burton's reputation as a ladies' man had reached the ears of her mother, however, and Mrs. Arundell refused to allow her daughter to meet him. One day in September 1850, Isabel was strolling in the plaza at Boulogne when


she caught Burton staring at her. She ignored his gaze and continued on her way. The next day as she was walking over a bridge, Burton appeared next to her. She stopped and Burton wrote "May I speak to you?" in chalk on the wall. Isabel replied, "No, mother will be angry," and walked away. Her brief interlude with Burton, however, convinced her that he was the man she would marry. From that day until their marriage, Isabel took careful note of every action Burton made.  

From 1849 to 1853, Burton was the only man in a house full of women. His health had quickly returned on his arrival in Europe. Temporarily freed from the confines of active military service and failing health, Burton began to write voraciously. In 1851 and 1852, he published four books on India, totaling over 1500 pages. *Goa and the Blue Mountains*, *Scinde; or, the Unhappy Valley*, *Sindh and the Races that Inhabit the Valley of the Indus*, and *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus* were all published in that two-year span. Each of his works was moderately well received. Burton’s verbose, yet compelling writing style was clever and often caustic. His opinions and frank discussions kept the books’ sales moderate. His harsh treatment of the Christianization of natives and of British Imperialism earned him the title of dissident. It was this reputation that kept his sales modest.  

In 1852, Burton completed his *Complete System of Bayonet Exercise*, the first manual on the subject. Burton was highly criticized for its publication in Britain, rather than through the

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32. Ibid., 167.

33. Brodie, 74.
army. It was eagerly read, however, by foreign officers worldwide. The Germans were impressed enough by Burton's system to buy large quantities of the 36-page pamphlet. Years later, the British War Office reprinted it and used it as the standard manual for the British Army.

The failure of the book little bothered Burton, however, as he had begun preparations for an attempted exploration of the forbidden Moslem cities of Medina and Mecca. The cities were forbidden to all non-Moslems under the penalty of death. In the fall of 1842, Burton secured the financial support of several important members of the Royal Geographic Society. With the support of these men, Burton earned an extra year's leave from the Bombay Army to make his pilgrimage. He decided to disguise himself as Mizra Abdullah, a Persian doctor. Burton disappeared in London and reappeared April 3, 1853 as Abdullah. By April 14, he set sail for Alexandria, Egypt. In Egypt, he mingled with other Moslems to see if his disguise was effective. His Arabic was flawless, and his mannerisms were such that neither Englishmen nor Moslems could see through his disguise. From Alexandria, Burton travelled to Cairo. There he met Haji Wali, a Russian born Moslem. Wali taught Burton much about both Egypt and Islam before sending Burton on his journey.

Burton made the 84-mile trip from Cairo to Suez on camel through the desert. Upon his arrival in Suez, he found a filthy

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34. Ibid., 86-7.
35. Dearden, 50.
town that survived only on pilgrim trade. On July 11, 1853, Burton boarded the Golden Wire and sailed for Yenbo. Ninety-seven passengers crowded aboard the sixty-passenger boat. Burton marvelled at the politeness and geniality of his companions despite the cramped quarters, stifling heat, and unsanitary conditions. His twelve day journey went well until his ship made a scheduled stop at Marsa Marar on July 15. While wading ashore, Burton stepped on a poisonous sea urchin. The injury resulted in a serious infection which almost cancelled the remainder of Burton's trip. Not to be defeated, Burton hired a camel, attached a litter to it, and lamely continued his travels.

The complications of his injury corrected, Burton embarked with two servants on the 120-mile trip to Medina with a caravan of other pilgrims. Shortly into the journey, on July 24, the caravan was attacked at Pilgrimage Pass by Bedouin bandits:

"A number of Badawin [sic] were to be seen swarming like hornets over the crests of hills, boys as well as men carrying huge weapons, and climbing with the agility of cats. They took up comfortable places on the cut-throat eminence, and began firing upon us with perfect convenience to themselves."

Twelve pilgrims and several camels were killed in the raid. The caravan then limped through a treacherous basalt ridge into the holy city of Medina.

In his guise as Mizra Abdullah, Burton became friends with

37. Ibid., 210.
38. Ibid., 221.
39. Dearden, 84.
Hamid, a resident of Medinah. Hamid provided Burton with lodgings for his month-long stay in Medina. While in the holy city, Burton viewed the Prophet's Mosque, which was guarded by 120 eunuchs, and the burial place of Fatima, Mohammed's favorite daughter. His travels in Medina were hampered by his swollen foot, but with the aid of Hamid and a donkey, Burton overcame this bodily shortcoming. Hamid arranged for Burton to travel to Mecca with a caravan along the Darb el-Sharki, or inland road. While several non-Moslems had made the trip to Mecca before, all had travelled by a coastal route. Burton was elated to be the first occidental to travel the inland road. The caravan began on August 31, 1853, bound for Mecca. There were a few poor wells on the road, but they were guarded by soldiers who charged exhorbitant sums for the water, and skinned every important shrine in Mecca. He left poor water they contained. The caravan travelled mostly at night to avoid bandits. The pilgrims were unbothered until they reached the "Pass of Death" and were ambushed. The number of men in the caravan, however, forced the bandits to retreat, and the caravan continued onward unmolested. On the night of September 10, 1853, Burton arrived in Mecca. He spent his first night in the home of his servant Mohammed's parents. On the eleventh, he rushed to the Kaaba, or Great Mosque:

"There at last it lay, the bourn of my long and weary Pilgrimage, realising the plans and hopes of many and many a year...There were no


42. Ibid., 132.
giant fragments of hoar antiquity as in Egypt, no remains of graceful and harmonious beauty as in Greece and Italy, no barbarous gorgeousness as in the buildings of India; yet the view was strange, unique— and how few have looked upon the shrine... It was as if the poetical legends of the Arab spoke truth, and that the waving wings of angels, not the sweet breeze of morning were agitating and swelling the black covering of the shrine. But, to confess humbling truth, theirs was the high feeling of religious enthusiasm, mine was the ecstasy of gratified pride."

Without wasting time, Burton, Mohammed, and his friends pushed their way through the massive crowds to the base of the Kaaba. In succeeding visits, Burton measured the entire mosque with a tape measure and by pacing the walls. Later, he drank from the sacred well of Zemzen, marched to Mount Arafat, and cast stones at the Devil's monument at Muna. In six days, Burton had measured and sketched every important shrine in Mecca. He left Mecca after a week having done and seen everything.

From Mecca, Burton and Mohammed travelled to Jedda to await ship passage to Suez. It was still too dangerous for Burton to reveal his true identity. Tired and out of money, however, Burton approached the vice-consul in Jedda who gave him enough money for passage to London. Burton travelled to Cairo and worked on a written account of his travels until his leave expired. Then Burton sailed from Cairo back to his post in Bombay. In route, Burton befriended James Grant Lumsden, a member of the Bombay Council. Lumsden secured the patronage of Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, for Burton. With

Elphinstone's patronage, Burton planned his next exploration: a trip to another unpenetrated Moslem city, Harrar in Somaliland. Burton intended to enter Harrar alone. His mission, however, also included the exploration of the uncharted jungles of Somaliland. To aid him, he secured the services of two members of his old Sindh survey team, Lieutenant G. E. Herne and Lieutenant William Stroyan. Upon arrival in Somaliland, Lieutenant John Hanning Speke volunteered to join the expedition. Burton had never met Speke before the expedition and Speke had little interest in the geographical work of Burton, Herne, and Stroyan. Rather, Speke was in Somaliland to hunt big game, but was refused permission to enter the interior with hunting as his sole purpose. Thus, Speke volunteered for Burton's team more in an effort to hunt than to survey. On their first meeting, Burton and Speke became great friends and Burton was impressed with Speke's enthusiasm. To Herne and Stroyan, Burton assigned the exploration of Berbera, and to Speke the important exploration of the Wadi Nogal, a river area suspected of containing gold.

On October 29, 1854, Burton left his party for the trip to Harrar. They planned to rejoin each other on January 15, 1855. Burton dressed as an Arab merchant and then sailed from Aden to Zayla. In this instance, Burton's costume failed him. He had forgotten to procure a bottle of walnut juice to stain his skin and was easily detected. Upon his arrival in Zayla, however, he found that the mules he had ordered and paid for three

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44. Hastings, 92.
45. Ibid., 93-4.
months earlier had not been purchased by his advance agent. Burton then spent twenty-eight days in Zayla awaiting his mules. While there, he spent his time learning Somali customs. Finally on November 27, 1854, Burton’s party of four mules, five camels, twenty men and two women set out for the city of Harrar.  

Burton avoided the most direct route, through the Eesa, because of the natives’ habit of mutilating enemies. Rather, Burton took a less direct route that only crossed through 50 miles of Eesa territory. In six days, Burton’s party had crossed the Eesa border and were in the comparatively safe region of Gudabursi. The longest stage of the journey, the crossing of the Gudabursi region lasted from December 7 to December 23. From the Gudabursi, Burton crossed the Marar plains. At Sagharrah, twenty miles from Harrar, his party revolted and refused to continue. The threat of death at the hands of the Emir of Harrar for leading a non-Moslem to the city overwhelmed Burton’s crew. At length, Burton persuaded two of his party to continue with him to Harrar. Burton was often confused for a Turk during this trip. Shortly before arriving at Harrar, however, Burton heard of the Emir’s distrust of Turks:

"As I approached the city, men turned out of their villages to ask if that was the Turk who was going to his death? The question made me resolve to appear before the Emir in my own character, an Englishman. In these lands...the Ottoman is more feared than the Frank."  

On January 3, 1855, Burton and his two companions rode into


47. Ibid., 143.
Harrar. While Burton was pleased with his accomplishment, the city was not what Burton had expected:

"The spectacle, materially speaking was a disappointment: nothing conspicuous appeared but two grey minarets of rude shape: many would have grudged three lives to win so paltry a prize. But of all that have attempted, none have ever succeeded in entering that pile of stones." 48

Burton was brought before the Emir, Sultan Ahmad bin Sultan Abubakr. The Emir smiled at Burton, giving Burton much relief. Burton was given comfortable quarters and full hospitality, but was not allowed to leave the city. He was constantly spied upon, making notetaking impossible. Later, his book on the expedition was written almost entirely from memory. Burton’s knowledge impressed the scholars and influenced the Emir. Burton’s release was secured after ten days. Herne and Stroyan had sent a messenger to the Emir inquiring about Burton’s status. The Emir, frightened by the prospect of English intervention in Harrar politics, and Harrar’s lucrative slave trade, released Burton on January 13. 49

On his return to Sagharrah, the villagers and the remainder of his party showered Burton with affection. He stayed in Sagharrah for a week in order to rest his mules and to compile a vocabulary of the Harrar tongue, and then travelled to Berbera, late for his rendezvous with Herne and Stroyan. Concerned about the lost time, Burton and three companions took a shortcut,

48. Richard F. Burton. First_Footsteps in East Africa. (London 1910), 198. Burton’s account was serious. During the battle, he saw the figure of Stroyan lying prone.

49. Brodie, 113.
leaving the remainder of the party behind to catch up later. The Burton party forced their mules to travel without rest and arrived in Berbera on January 30. To Burton's great fortune, a steamer from Berbera, Burton, Herne, and Stroyan sailed for Aden, arriving on February 9, 1855. Two weeks later, Speke returned to Aden. With him, Speke brought the skins, feathers, and skulls of dozens of animals he had shot on the trip. He had no information on the Wadi Nogal, however, for he had never reached it. Speke blamed the failure on his guide, Mohammed Sumunter. Sumunter, Speke maintained, had cheated him, stolen from him, and overcharged him. Burton was both angry at Sumunter and disappointed in Speke. While Sumunter might have been guilty of Speke's charges, such things were routine in Africa and could have been overcome. Burton had Sumunter jailed for two months, fined 200 rupees, and banished from Aden.

This move, however, would bring Burton's party to disaster. Sumunter was a petty chief of a tribe near Aden. The natives of the tribe were very much incensed by the Burton's actions. From Aden, Burton and his company planned to spend the rest of their leave searching for the source of the Nile. In April, Burton, Herne, Stroyan, Speke, and a party of forty-two Egyptian, Nubian, and Arab workers set out to find the Nile. At 2 a.m. On April 20, 1855, only days after the expedition began, the party was attacked by natives loyal to Sumunter. Stroyan was killed, Speke was captured, and both Herne and Burton were injured before the natives were driven off. Burton's injury was serious. During the battle, Burton thought he saw the figure of Stroyan lying prone.
near where the camels were tied. As he tried to wade through the battle to where he thought Stroyan lay, a spear pierced his cheek and imbedded itself in his palate. Burton then fell back from the battle to a nearby creek. To Burton's good fortune, a ship captained by a friend of his was anchored nearby. The sailors found Burton and Herne after the battle was over. Soon thereafter, Speke emerged on the beach with eleven spear wounds. He had escaped from a Somali warrior during the night. Stroyan was found dead with wounds to the heart, abdomen, and forehead. Discouraged by this event, Burton cancelled the expedition.

FROM THE CRIMEA TO THE NILE

Burton emerged from Africa a much more popular man than when he left Bombay. His *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Mecca* had been released during the Somali expedition to a warm reception. The impact of its release was lessened somewhat, however, by the outbreak of the Crimean War. Still, the book was well received and sold briskly. Burton's injury from the ambush left a sinister scar on his face and also left him temporarily unable to speak. During this mute period, Burton completed *First Footsteps in East Africa*, his narrative of the journey to Harrar. The book was hastily written and was not as well received as his earlier *Pilgrimage*.

Burton, devastated by the death of his close friend Stroyan, and also disturbed by news of his mother's recent death, volunteered for service in the Crimea. This move was probably not in Burton's best interest. "Indian" officers were routinely discriminated against by other British officers in general and by the Crimean Commander-in-Chief, Lord Raglan, in particular. Not a single officer who had served in the British East India Army was given a cavalry command in the Crimea despite the fact that very few non-"Indian" officers in the British Army had ever seen battle.

After Raglan's death in June 1855, the command in the Crimea was assumed by General James Simpson, remarkably a former (albeit briefly) India officer. Burton arrived in July and was posted as Chief-of-Staff for General W.F. Beatson. Beatson was charged with raising and training 4000 Turkish cavalry in the Dardanelles.
Burton was quickly disillusioned by his post. Beatson held little control over his men and rarely disciplined the troops. Burton was equally appalled with the senselessness of the Crimean War and the ineptitude of most of the British Army leaders.

Burton's problems were compounded in September 1855. While away in Constantinople preparing for a potential intelligence mission, his troops clashed with some French regulars. French and Turkish regulars then surrounded Burton's camp with artillery. Burton returned and aided Beatson in diffusing the situation. The incident caused Beatson's removal on September 28, 1855. Burton resigned his post and transferred from the Crimea in October. On October 18, Burton sailed for London. 51

Burton spent early 1856 on leave from the Army recuperating from the unsanitary conditions he had endured in the Dardanelles and then began preparation for another attempt at finding the source of the Nile. One August afternoon, he unexpectedly came across Isabel Arundell while strolling in the Botanical gardens. They talked for an hour and she conspicuously hinted that she attended the gardens daily. The next day, Burton was waiting at the gardens when she arrived. Each day for two weeks, they met at the gardens. At the end of that period, Burton proposed marriage. After six years of hope, Isabel's wish had been fulfilled. She promptly accepted. 52

Their marriage was postponed, however. Burton's trip to the Nile had already advanced past the planning stages. He had


52. I. Burton, Life, I, 250.
received 1000 pounds from the Royal Geographic Society and two years leave with pay from the Bombay Army. He was to be joined on the expedition by John Hanning Speke and Dr. John Steinhaeuser. Burton travelled to Bombay to secure Speke’s leave from the army. The two then sailed to Zanzibar. On December 20, 1856, they arrived and began to make preparations for their trip. During preliminary explorations, both Speke and Burton contracted fevers and were forced to return to Zanzibar. Illness delayed the expedition for six months. During that time, Burton began to learn Swahili and took volumes of ethnographic notes. They made friends with the Consul at Zanzibar who helped them arrange an expeditionary force and offered to have the consulate help pay the native bearers. Dr Steinhaeuser’s leave from the army was cancelled, forcing him to bow out of the expedition. On June 16, 1857, Burton and Speke sailed from Zanzibar to Wale Point to begin their expedition in earnest. They organized a caravan of 132 men and 30 donkeys complete with a two year supply of clothing, food, and ammunition. The 600-mile trip from Wale Point to Kazeh, an Arab slave outpost, was gruelling. Burton and Speke were often ill. Their porters began to desert almost from the beginning of the expedition. Deserters never failed to raid the expedition’s supplies of cloth and food before leaving. The dampness of the jungle threatened to mildew their journals. Most of their scientific instruments were lost in a river crossing. The tsetse flies of the area gradually killed most of the party’s donkeys. An epidemic of malaria overwhelmed the

Finally, on November 7, 1857, one hundred thirty-four days after embarking, the expedition arrived at Kazeh. Burton was welcomed by the village leader, Snay bin Amir. Despite Burton's reservations concerning Snay's slave-trading activities, the two men quickly became friends. Snay gave Burton all the information he possessed concerning local geography. He also helped Burton compile vocabularies of the three most used dialects in Central Africa.

Upon arrival in Kazeh, most of the expedition's few remaining bearers demanded payment and deserted. Burton and Speke were forced to remain in Kazeh for over a month in an effort to re-outfit the expedition. Finally, on December 14, Burton and Speke left Kazeh bound for Msene. From Msene, they travelled in the Kanjanjeri area were Burton was once again struck by malaria. This infection caused paralysis in Burton's legs that would last for eleven months. After trying unsuccessfully to ride on a donkey, he was carried in a sling by eight porters. At the same time, Speke was struck with an infection of his retina leaving him virtually blind. On February 13, 1858, Burton and his chief porter, Seedy Bombay, crossed a steep ridge and found Lake Tanganyika—the longest and second deepest freshwater lake in the World. They descended the ridge to the lakeside city of Ujiji and there, Burton collapsed.

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54. Hastings, 98.


56. Brodie, 155.
Now virtually blind as well as paralyzed, Burton sent a recuperaed Speke, Bombay, and three bearers to secure a boat and rights for exploration from the natives. On March 29, nearly a month later, Speke returned with neither a boat nor exploration rights from the natives. Speke had returned from his trip, however, with a rumor that a river flowed north from the lake. Heartened at the prospect that his discovery might actually be the source of the Nile, Burton immediately made preparations for the exploration of Lake Tanganyika. By April, Burton had recovered his sight, but not the use of his legs. Still, he refused to postpone the exploration. Burton procured two canoes, 60- and 40-feet long, respectively, for the exploration of the lake. On April 12, the exploration began. Burton quickly found, however, that Speke's rumor had sprung from the latter's inability to communicate with the natives. No one had said that a river flowed from Lake Tanganyika. On the contrary, all accounts indicated that a river flowed into the lake from the North. Disheartened, Burton and Speke returned to Ujiji. Burton had not found the source of the Nile. It was not until 1875 that he would learn that he had discovered the source of the Congo.

On their return to Ujiji, Burton found that the guide left in charge of their supplies had stolen, sold, or consumed most of them. Burton's party was faced with starvation and no supplies for their return trip when fortune smiled upon them. On May 22, a caravan arrived with fresh supplies. Burton had ordered them months earlier and had given up on their arrival. In the supplies were letters from India, Europe, and Zanzibar. In these were a packet of letters from Isabel Arundell including journal and
newspaper articles she had saved for Burton. Thus restocked, the party left Ujiji on May 26.

At Yombo in June, they met a second supply train. Included was another package of letters. In these, Burton learned of his father's death on September 6, 1857. Shortly after this caravan, the expedition arrived in Kazeh. At Kazeh, the strained relations between Burton and Speke fractured. Burton was only beginning to regain the use of his legs while Speke had almost fully recovered. Speke became bored. There was no game for him to hunt. The only person he could converse fluently with was Burton and Burton was busy compiling vocabularies of foreign tongues.

Burton's newfound health and lingering boredom caused him to seek new horizons. He urged Burton to join him in search of a lake that Arabs had described as even bigger than Lake Tanganyika. Burton, still paralyzed and mostly ill, declined Speke's offer. This was to be Burton's most grave mistake. On July 10, Speke began his solo expedition. He marched quickly and uneventfully towards immortality. On August 3, he reached Lake Ukerewe which he renamed Lake Victoria. Certain that he had found the source of the Nile, Speke rushed back to Kazeh to inform Burton without having explored the waters of Lake Victoria. 57

On August 26, Speke informed Burton of his discovery. Burton was skeptical, as Speke had not obtained any evidence to support his claim. He had not seen where the Nile flowed from the lake. He had not even seen the western shore of the lake. Burton's dismissal of Speke's discovery caused Speke much anger. Each

57. Moorehead, 37.
thought that their discovery was the most important of the expedition. As their relationship deteriorated, the men decided not to discuss the subject until they reached England.

On September 6, Burton and Speke left Kazeh for Zanzibar. On the four-month trip, Speke fell gravely ill with hydrophobia. Burton nursed him back to health and had the natives carry him in a hammock the remainder of the trip. On February 2, they arrived at the port of Konduchi where they obtained a craft and sailed for Zanzibar.58

The new consul at Zanzibar was Captain Christopher Rigby, the man that Burton had defeated in language tests in India in 1843. Rigby despised Burton. When Burton sent his manuscript on Zanzibar to Rigby's Foreign Office to be forwarded to the Royal Geographical Society for publication, Rigby intentionally sent it to India where it was lost for eight years. Rigby befriended Speke, but was barely civil to Burton. Rigby also rescinded the previous consul's offer to help pay the expedition's bearers. As a result, Burton had to spend 1400 pounds of his own money in addition to the 1000 pounds granted to him by the Royal Geographical Society. Burton paid the loyal porters, but refused to pay any of the deserters or thieves more than their original advance money. Speke offered to reimburse Burton for half the expedition upon their return to London.59

Burton and Speke travelled to Aden on March 22, 1859. There, they parted company. Speke travelled to London while Burton

58. Ibid., 40.

59. Brodie, 166.
remained in Aden to recuperate. According to Burton, Speke's last words before boarding his ship were, "Goodbye old fellow; you may be quite sure I shall not go up to the Royal Geographic Society until you come to the fore and we appear together. Make your mind quite easy about that." 60

On May 9, 1859, the day he arrived in London, Speke proceeded to the office of Sir Roderick Murchison, President of the Royal Geographic Society. Murchison embraced Speke's story and immediately made preparations for a second expedition, with Speke in command. When Burton arrived in London, he found himself cast aside for the quicker Speke. On May 23, The Royal Geographic Society presented Burton with a Founder's medal. During his two-hour speech at the ceremony, however, Murchison spent much time praising Speke's discovery while almost ignoring Burton's. 61

The already fragile relationship between Burton and Speke was irreparably shattered. Speke publicly decried Burton's importance on the expedition and privately spread rumors of Burton's sexual misconduct in Africa. Speke then formally accused Burton of cheating the natives and of homosexuality. Burton did not speak publicly against Speke for several months. Then, as Speke's attacks intensified, Burton became hostile.

Speke had many supporters in the lively debate that followed. Burton did, after all, have many enemies. Speke's public case,

60. Ibid.

61. Hastings, 130.
however, was damaged by his failure to reimburse Burton for part of the 1400 pounds the latter had expended in Africa. Efforts to reunite the two explorers by Isabel Arundell and their mutual friend Norton Shaw failed. Finally, after seeing Burton win support over the issue, Speke acquiesced. A week before embarking on his second Nile expedition, Speke arranged for his brother to pay Burton 600 pounds. More was involved than just the money, Burton was anguished over the deterioration of their friendship. The situation led him to write in 1867, "These reminiscences forcibly suggest to me the Arab couplet—'I taught him archery day by day—when his arm waxed strong, 'twas me he shot." The hatred between Burton and Speke was not to end, however, until Speke's death in 1864.

Burton, driven by the constant turmoil with Speke, and the memory of constant effort to win Isabel from her, Arundell, took several extended excursions to Boulogne. There he compiled his first book on the Optical Africa. It was released to mixed reviews in April 1860, shortly after Speke had embarked on his next trip to Africa. The work on Lake Tanganyika completed, he began preparation for his next travels—to Salt Lake City, Utah.

Burton left his confused personal life in London and sailed for Heathfield, New South Wales on April 21, 1860. He arrived in Sydney and then travelled to Washington D.C. Burton's travels from Washington are unknown until August 4, when he boarded a steamboat headed for Salt Lake City.

Burton arrived in Salt Lake City on August 7th, 1860. Burton's activities in the City in the Next weeks. On August 12th, the Mormons

On May 22, 1859, he found her, Mrs. Eliza Arundell, Isabel's mother had fought for three years to quell her daughter's infatuation with Burton. To the piously Catholic Arundell, Burton's actions and non-Catholicism made him an unsuitable suitor. Isabel was torn between the wishes of her mother and her eight year love affair with Burton. When he proposed elopement, Isabel refused. In deference to her mother, Isabel would only meet Burton in her own home or in the homes of close friends.

Burton, exhausted by the constant turmoil with Speke, and the equally constant fight to win Isabel from Mrs. Arundell, took frequent vacations to Boulogne. There he completed his *Lake Regions of Central Africa*. It was released to mixed reviews in April 1860, shortly after Speke had embarked on his next trip to Africa. His work on Lake Tanganyika completed, he began preparation for his next travels—to Salt Lake City, Utah. Burton left his confused personal life in London and sailed for Halifax, Nova Scotia on April 21, 1860. He arrived in mid-May and then travelled to Washington D.C. Burton's travels from Washington are unknown until August 4, when he boarded a stagecoach headed for Salt Lake City.

Burton arrived in Salt lake City on August 28, 1860. Burton stayed in the city for three weeks. On August 29, the *Deseret News* officially welcomed Burton. During his stay, Burton interviewed many Mormons, attended Mormon services and social
functions, roughly mapped the town and read multitudes of both pro- and anti-Mormon material. Burton was also granted an interview with Brigham Young. Burton was impressed with Young. The religious leader possessed, Burton wrote, "a total absence of pretension in his manner, and he has been so long used to power that he cares nothing of its display." Burton also impressed Young. He led Burton on a tour of the city and they parted on friendly terms. Burton was especially interested in the Mormon practice of polygamy. Most avenues of inquest in this matter were closed to Burton. Burton found out much about polygamy, however, from talking to Salt Lake’s residents. While not defending polygamy, as he was later charged with doing, Burton wrote of the Mormon system in admiring terms. Despite what most considered to be an immoral state; Burton wrote that, "in points of morality the Mormon community is perhaps purer than any other of equal numbers." 64

Burton’s stay had delighted the suspicious Mormons. In a farewell address, the editor of the Deseret News wrote, "Capt. Burton has been one of the few gentlemen who have passed through Utah without leaving behind him a disagreeable souvenir. The Captain has seen Utah without goggles; we wish him a safe journey." 65 Burton travelled from Salt Lake to San Francisco. From there, Burton travelled to Panama and then on to England.
On his return to London, Burton again sought out Isabel—this time with an ultimatum. Burton told Isabel that she must either consent to marry him, or he would return to India, never to return. Isabel, thus confronted, consented to marriage. With the exception of Mrs. Arundell, Isabel’s family approved. Isabel was twenty-nine, a veritable old maid. Fearful of injuring her mother’s health, Isabel opted for a secret ceremony. On January 21, 1861, Burton and Isabel were married at the Bavarian Catholic Church.66 There were eight in the wedding party. Burton informed Henry Arundell, Isabel’s father, who then informed Mrs. Arundell two weeks later.

Lord Houghton, Monckton Milnes, held a party in honor of the Burtons that included the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, on the guest list. With this party, the Burtons had socially arrived for Milnes wielded great influence in British social circles. His parties were gala affairs and his house was the "English Mecca for poets, wits, and eccentrics as well as politicians and journalists."67 The Milnes’ party led the Burtons on a whirlwind social tour in 1861. Burton’s newfound status also substantially boosted the mediocre sales of Lake Regions in Central Africa.

Burton and Milnes enjoyed each other’s company and established a lifelong friendship at this time. Burton had hoped for many years to obtain a diplomatic post as consul in Damascus. The Foreign Office, however, offered him the tiny post at Fernando Po, a disease-ridden island near West

Burton took the post and was immediately, and permenantly, released from the Bombay Army. Burton hoped that Fernando Po would eventually lead to the post at Damascus. After only seven months of marriage, Burton left London for Fernando Po. He refused Isabel’s efforts to accompany him— with good reason. Fernando Po was no fit place for most hardy men, much less the proper Isabel.

Burton arrived in Fernando Po in September 1861. His job was undemanding and left him much time for exploration. After only a week on the island, Burton left for an exploration of the Niger delta. He returned to his post in October, but only long enough to prepare for a trip to Abeokuta, the capital of Nigeria. In November, Burton explored the Brass river and in December, he led the first successful expedition to climb Mount Victoria, the highest peak in the Cameroon Mountains. In February 1862, he returned to Fernando Po for six weeks in order to organize an expedition up the Gabon river. In late 1862, at Isabel’s insistence, the Foreign Office recalled Burton for a four month leave of absence.

Burton arrived in Liverpool in December 1862. During that month, he was again swept into the social circuit by his family and Monckton Milnes. In January 1863, Burton and James Hunt founded the Anthropological Society of London as an outlet for the publication of studies that other societies, such as the Royal Geographic Society, would not publish. After six weeks, Burton returned to London to publish some of the stories he had written about his African travels, such as Burton's book on Zanzibar and the Natives of the Eastern Coast of Africa. His book was well received and became a bestseller.

68. Hastings, 144-5
69. Ibid., 148.
found that he could not engage in Isabel's societal whirl and still write. In mid-January, he began planning a vacation to the Canary Islands. The Burtons stayed in Teneriffe for two months. During this time, Isabel proved her adaptability. Without servants, she did all the cooking, cleaning, and laundry. Burton found plenty of time to write and also found that he enjoyed Isabel's company as well.

Burton returned to Fernando Po, well rested, in April. His spirits rejuvenated, he attacked his explorations with a new intensity. Almost immediately after his arrival in Fernando Po, he launched an expedition up the mighty Congo river. He lacked the funds to launch a major expedition, and confined himself to previously explored areas. In August 1863, the Foreign Office granted Burton permission to visit the kingdom of Dahomey. Most Dahomey had the reputation of slaughtering hundreds of victims every new year and of owning a pool of blood large enough to sail a canoe on. Burton had earlier visited Dahomey without Foreign Office permission. The lake of blood was a complete myth and Burton estimated that the annual number of sacrifices numbered in the hundreds rather than the thousands. Burton's official trip was made to protest Dahomey's slave trade and its annual human sacrifices.

70. Burton started for Agbome, the capital of Dahomey, in November. He arrived later that month for his audience with Gelele, King of Dahomey. Gelele impressed Burton. He had formed an Amazon force of some 2500 women. Gelele treated Burton as an

70. Farwell, 225-6.
honored guest, but refused to grant him an audience. Burton pushed for an audience before the New Year began as Dahomey was reputed to slay 500 victims to begin every year. As the ceremonies drew near, Burton protested to Gelele’s ministers. Gelele freed ten of the prisoners held for sacrifice and had all the executions performed at night, out of Burton’s sight. In all, twenty-three victims, all prisoners and criminals, were sacrificed, hardly the hundreds that had been previously reported. After the ceremonies had ended, Gelele granted Burton’s interview. Burton protested the slayings and threatened British intervention over Dahomey’s slave trade. Gelele became angry and the conference soon ended. Burton then returned to his consulship until being recalled in July 1864.

During his consulship at Fernando Po, Burton was at his most prolific. His *City of the Saints* had been released to rave reviews in 1861 shortly after his arrival in Fernando Po. From his travels in West Africa, Burton published many articles as well as four books: *Abeokuta and the Cameroon Mountains* (1863), *Wanderings in West Africa* (1863), *Mission to Gelele, King of Dahomey* (1864), and *Two Trips to Gorilla Land* (1876).

Burton returned to London in August 1864 to find that the debate with Speke had only intensified in his absence. Speke had returned to London from his second expedition in the summer of 1863 certain that Lake Victoria was the headwaters of the Nile. Upon his return, Speke again took up his attacks against Burton. While Speke was being idolized by the British public, important

71. Ibid., 239.
members of the scientific world were beginning to sour on Speke's attacks. Prominent scientists such as Charles Beke, Viscount Strangford, and James Macqueen were all won over to Burton's side. Macqueen even wrote a series of articles refuting Speke's claims. Especially damaging was Macqueen's article in the Morning Advertiser which gave evidence that, according to Speke's records, the Nile ran uphill for 90-miles. To damage Speke's case further, David Livingstone returned to England from Africa in support of Burton. Livingstone, the most popular explorer in Great Britain, did not like Burton, but had found evidence in his travels that reversed some of Speke's claims.

Upon Burton's return to London, the British Association for the Advancement of Science proposed that Burton debate Speke at their annual meeting at Bath. Livingstone was to moderate the debate. At first the two men hesitated, but they were eventually convinced to attend the meeting. On September 15, the conference commenced. Burton arrived with Isabel at his side. They soon ran into Speke, who walked past and refused to speak. During the opening meeting, Speke was obviously nervous and finally rose from his seat, exclaimed "I cannot stand this," and left the lecture hall. Burton returned to the lecture hall the next day for the debate. Upon his arrival, he found that in the next room, several members of the Association's council were passing a note amongst themselves. After half an hour, the chairman mounted the podium

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73. Brodie, 223.
and announced that Speke was dead. 74

Speke had left the lecture hall the day before and travelled to his uncle's home nearby. There he, his cousin George Fuller, Dr. Thomas Fitzherbert Snow, and the Gamekeeper Daniel Davis went hunting. The four men spread out to hunt birds. At about four o'clock, Fuller heard Speke's shotgun fire. Fuller turned to see Speke fall from a two-foot wall with a gaping hole in his chest. Speke died fifteen minutes later. The coroner ruled the death an accident, but whispers of suicide circulated about Speke's death for months afterward. Indeed, Speke's death was suspicious. A professional hunter all his life, Speke was ever familiar with weapons and their handling. The nature of the wound suggested that Speke had held the barrel of the gun quite close to his chest. Yet Burton had observed in Africa that "even when our canoe was shaken and upthrown by the hippopotamus he never allowed his gun to look at him or at others." 75 It has been widely suggested that Speke killed himself to avoid having his achievements belittled at the debate.

Whether suicide or accident, Speke's death did not end the Nile controversy. It would rage on for two more decades. If Speke's death was suicide, it was proven even more needless by the fact that he was correct, Lake Victoria was the main source of the Nile. Burton stubbornly pushed Lake Tanganyika as the Nile source until 1876 when Henry Stanley proved it to be the source of the Congo instead.

75. R. Burton, Zanzibar, II, 398.
Burton desperately wanted a good diplomatic post, but could not bring himself to beg the Foreign Office for a new one. Isabel, on the other hand, had no qualms about begging for a new post for her husband. In September 1864, the Foreign Office Commander, Lord Russell, finally found Burton another position— in Santos, Brazil. Before leaving for Brazil, Burton privately published 200 copies of Stone Talk, a 121-page satirical poem, under the pseudonym Frank Baker. The poem was critical of the British in India, and in the Crimea. It was also Burton's first public admission of atheism and his support of Darwinism. Burton showed a copy to Isabel who enjoyed the book until she realized that it was he who had written it. Fearing that Burton's career might be damaged should the authorship of Stone Talk be found, Isabel secretly bought up as many copies of the book as she could find and destroyed them. The climate in Santos was little better than at Fernando Po, yet Burton allowed Isabel to join him at his post. Burton arrived at Santos in the summer of 1865, followed by Isabel that fall. The climate was much too harsh for Isabel and she fell ill with a fever. Burton decided to move her to a more hospitable area, and settled on Sao Paulo, fifty miles from Santos. There, Isabel found an abandoned monastery which the Burtons quickly made their

76. Brodie, 234-5.
77. Farwell, 250.
The Burtons were happy in Brazil. Burton was surrounded by things to explore. Isabel, for the first time in her marriage, had a stable home with her husband. Burton taught Isabel to ride horseback, to fence, and to edit his manuscripts. The higher elevation at Sao Paulo left them virtually free of the malarial swamps at Santos. Burton thrust himself with vigor into the work of documenting Brazil's industry, geography, and trade. Dom Pedro II, the Emperor of Brazil, found Burton fascinating and the two men became friends. Pedro often gave Burton precedence over ministers at official functions which made Burton's British superiors jealous. The Burtons were very popular in Brazilian social circles despite the jealousies of the British diplomatic corps.

All was not well, however. Burton lost a small fortune speculating on the Brazilian mining industry, making his pay from the Foreign Office a necessity. Isabel found publication very hard.

In July 1867, after eighteen months at Santos and Sao Paulo, Burton took a three-month leave to raft down the Sao Francisco river. While much of the Sao Francisco had been explored, one long stretch remained unriden. The Burtons set out for Sabara, the headwaters of the untamed river. On the way, Isabel sprained her ankle. She tried to continue on the trip, but her injury made the river ride impossible. She returned to Rio de Janeiro with all but three members of the original party. Burton and the three remaining Brazilians lashed two 33-foot canoes together for the
1500-mile trip. Isabel waited in Rio for over four months with no word from Burton. He finally arrived in early 1868, dissatisfied with the trip. Burton had found few geological specimens on the trip, and found the untamed river quite tame after all.

Following his trip, Burton fell seriously ill from hepatitis and heavy drinking over his financial losses. A lung infection complicated the hepatitis and almost killed him. After a doctor from Rio failed to cure him, Isabel tried her own remedies. She put holy water on his head and prayed. After an hour, Burton proclaimed himself on the road to recovery. Although Isabel was proud of her "miracle" cure, Burton continued to espouse his anti-Catholic views. Still ill, but improved, Burton resigned his post at Santos in April 1868. In July, Burton sent Isabel to London with a dozen of his manuscripts to find publishers for them, and to secure him another post with the Foreign Office.

Upon her return to England, Isabel found a publisher for his **Highlands of Brazil**, a narrative of his Sao Francisco trip. Isabel took offense at Burton's claims that the Catholic church's education system left its charges "in a peculiar state of ignorance, and supplied with certain remarkable superstitions and remarkable ideas." In a preface to the book, which she wrote and published without Burton's knowledge, she rebuked his passage stating it "misrepresents our Holy Roman Catholic Church." This


80. Farwell, 266.


82. Isabel Burton in R. Burton's *Brazil*, I, viii.
strong disapproval amused readers and reviewers, but also showed what a fiercely independent woman Isabel was.

Burton did not follow Isabel immediately to London. Rather, Burton travelled to Paraguay to gain a firsthand account of the war between Paraguay and Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. Burton’s resulting work *Letters from the Battlefields of Paraguay* (1870) was a masterpiece. He described the events and causes of the war with adeptness. He also included interviews with many generals and other leaders during the war. With *Battlefields*, Burton again proved what a powerful and effective writer he could be.

Meanwhile, Isabel was busy at the Foreign Office. In December 1868, she finally secured the post that Burton coveted most—Damascus. Burton arrived in England on June 1, 1869. He accepted the post, but immediately requested six weeks’ sick leave to regain his health from another bout with hepatitis. After a brief vacation in Boulogne with the poet Algernon Swinburne, Burton embarked for Damascus.

The Damascus post was demanding. While the official duties were light, Damascus was a hotbed of religious fanaticism and political intrigue. Burton arrived in Damascus on October 3, 1869 to find himself mistrusted in every quarter of the city. The Moslems distrusted him over his Mecca adventure. His atheism enamored him to the Christians very little. The Jewish sector distrusted all outsiders and Burton was no exception. The Turkish...
governor at Damascus at the time was the notoriously corrupt Mohhamed Rashid Pasha. Rashid Pasha, having heard of Burton's linguistic talents and his reputation as a gifted spy, immediately began to conspire for Burton's removal.

Burton set up residences in the nearby towns of Salihiyay and Bludan upon Isabel's arrival on December 31. In Burton's first days at the post, he showed the Syrians what his tenure would be like. He dismissed any official caught taking bribes, most of whom were being bribed by Rashid Pasha. Burton also proved his religious impartiality by holding receptions to which he invited guests of every race and religion. Isabel proved her devotion to the people by daily visiting hospitals, even during a cholera epidemic, to administer medicine. Burton took up archaeology in Syria and often went on digs with E.H. Palmer and Charles Tyrwhitt-Drake of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Burton and the younger Tyrwhitt-Drake formed a close friendship that would resemble a father-son relationship until the latter's death in 1872.

Burton's honesty deepened Rashid Pasha's distrust. The first nine months of Burton's tenure had proven uneventful, however, which negated any possibility for the Governor to lodge a protest. Then, in August 1870, religious tensions began to swell. A Catholic collecting a debt was beaten by a Moslem. The Catholic then went to the local Patriarch who had the debtor imprisoned, infuriating the Moslem community. In an unrelated incident, two young Jewish boys were caught drawing Christian crosses in the

84. Brodie, 253.
lavatory of a Moslem mosque, an act which infuriated both Christians and Moslems. A similar act had caused the massacre of 3000 Christians in Damascus in 1860. As tensions rose, Christians began to flee the city. When Burton heard rumors that a riot was planned for August 27, he rushed to Damascus and addressed the city council members, spurring them on to institute temporary martial law from August 26 to August 29. Burton's actions prevented the impending riot, and his popularity in parts of Damascus soared. Christians in the city began to view Burton as a savior and Moslem leaders also commended Burton's actions. Rashid Pasha and the local Jewish leaders, however, decried his actions as tyranny. When Burton called the two Jewish boys into his office, rumors circulated that Burton had had them tortured.

To add credibility to these false rumors, Burton encountered problems with three Jewish moneylenders in Damascus. In Syria at that time, creditors could have delinquent debtors jailed. If the creditor was protected by the British consulate, as these three Jews were, then the creditor could demand consular aid in the debtor's prosecution. On his arrival in Damascus, Burton posted a memo at the consulate proclaiming his refusal to aid the prosecution of debtors. On the contrary, Burton frequently went to jails and had victims of British creditors freed. The three Jewish creditors responded by starting a letterwriting campaign accusing Burton of antisemitism. These letters reached the hands of the Jewish activist Sir Moses

85. Ibid., 254-5.
Montefiore and Sir Francis Goldsmid, the Chief Rabbi of London. Both brought pressure on the new Foreign Office head, Lord Clarendon, to remove Burton.\textsuperscript{86} Isabel's behavior did not help Burton's position either. The British Ambassador to Constantinople, Sir Henry Elliot, had taken a dislike to Burton and wrote home reports of his dissatisfaction at every opportunity. Shortly after the riot was suppressed, Elliot wrote of an incident in which Isabel struck a Moslem youth with her riding whip. Elliot neglected to mention that the youth was attempting to mug Isabel, and that afterwards, Isabel had befriended the lad and hired him as a household servant.

In April 1871, the Burtons and Tyrwhitt-Drake went to the "Holy Lands" in Palestine for Easter. In Nazareth on May 5, a beggar tried to break into Isabel's tent while she slept. The beggar was thrown out by servants, but the servants were set upon by Greek friends of the beggar. As Burton and Tyrwhitt-Drake entered the fray to restore order, one of Burton's servants pulled his pistol and fired a shot in the air, chasing the beggar and his friends away. Burton went to the police and insisted on prosecution of the Greeks. The offenders appealed to the Greek Orthodox Bishop for asylum. The Bishop turned the brawl into a political event. Several Greeks swore that Burton himself fired the shot—into a crowd of children. Others reported that Burton entered the Greek Orthodox temple nearby, tore down relics, and shot a priest. Burton was cleared of all charges, but Elliot had delayed the delivery of Burton's report on the incident until

\textsuperscript{86} Dearden, 293-4.
after all the rumors had been circulated in London.

Rumors began to fly in Damascus that the British Consulate was about to recall Burton. Rashid Pasha, however, feared that the recall would take months and planned Burton's assassination. Burton and Tyrwhitt-Drake were returning from a visit to the Druses mountain sect when a servant of Isabel's met them on the road to Damascus. Isabel had become alarmed by Rashid Pasha's actions in Burton's absence and had sent him a coded warning message in a pill bottle. Burton received the message on May 24, 1871 and, alarmed at Isabel's urgency, hid with Tyrwhitt-Drake in the mountains. Shortly after Burton left the road, a force of one hundred horsemen and two hundred men on camelback stopped his servants and demanded to know of Burton's whereabouts. Burton returned to Damascus on June 7, 1871 to receive a wire from Lord Clarendon advising him to act scrupulously. The note puzzled Burton, but would not have had he known that Rashid Pasha had intercepted one of Burton's official correspondences and altered it so as to seem treasonous. Burton had asked for permission to visit the Druses sect, a group hostile to Rashid Pasha, near Damascus. Rashid Pasha altered the letter to indicate that Burton was instigating a revolt against him and sent it back to London. Burton was finally led to his removal from office by Isabel. She had chosen a Spanish Franciscan priest, Fray Emmanuel Forner, as her confessor in Damascus. He had secretly converted several hundred members of the Moslem Shazlis sect to Christianity in

87. Hastings, 180-1.

88. Brodie, 259-60.
early 1870. Fearful of Moslem persecution, Forner begged Isabel to petition Burton for British protection for the converts. At first Burton refused, but after Damascus officials indeed began to persecute the Shazlis converts, Burton tried to intercede on their behalf. The Shazlis began to idolize Burton, who tried to purchase a tract of land for them outside the city. This attempt at freeing the Shazlis from persecution cost Burton his post. On August 16, 1871, Burton received a message in Bludan relaying that he was to be replaced by Thomas Jago, the vice-consul of Beirut. Burton left Damascus for Beirut two days later.

Burton's dismissal caused a row both in Damascus and London. Isabel returned to Damascus to pack and was deluged by letters of regret from Moslems, Christians, and Jews. The Rashid Pasha was convicted of many atrocities a month later, but it was too late to save Burton's post. Moslems who thought that Burton had brought Rashid Pasha's downfall held mass prayer sessions for Burton's return. The British press lionized Burton and harshly rebuked the Foreign Office. Eight Moslem businessmen from Damascus wrote that Burton, "loved the Mohammedans and those who were under him. And there never came from him anything but truth, and he always walked with justice and hated none but the liars."

In March 1872, the Foreign Office issued a paper on Burton's dismissal. It contained both evidence against him and in his defense. The paper was not an apology, but a description of the events that led to his removal. In appeasement, Foreign Office

89. Abdullah, 93.

90. quoted in Brodie, 264.
head, Lord Granville, offered Burton the consulship at Pisa, Brazil. This offer was such a demotion that Burton refused. When the larger office at Teheran opened, Burton was not even considered for the post, causing further indignation on Burton's part. His return to London. He finished editing it for publication in Paris and was later published in London in 1948. When the manuscript arrived, and did not precede, his tenure in the office of a senior civil servant. Burton had once written, "I do not believe in the choice of race. There is none to which I would more willingly belong than the Jewish one. During his lifetime, he had been a supporter and admirer of Zionism. Burton's problems with the Jewish leaders, and the subsequent programs they caused, turned him against the entire religious group. After writing the novel 'The Jew,' however, Burton revised the manuscript.

Burton went on holiday, and virtually penniless, until the Spring of 1973 when a British speculator offered Burton 2000 pounds to explore the sulphur resources of Iceland. Burton arrived in Iceland on June 6 and stayed there for three months. His reports showed the profitability of mining in Iceland, but the speculator eventually decided not to risk the venture. Burton's expeditions resulted in his publication of 'Iceland, Thrift' (1975), an expanded compilation of Thiel's history, geography, geology, and natural history.
Burton's problems with which I would more in his lifetime, he had none. He finished editing it for publication just as Isabel arrived from Damascus in mid-October 1871. His next project, not to be published until 1898—eight years after his death, was a diatribe against Jews. His antisemitism came from, and did not precede, his tenure in Damascus. In his *Highlands of Brazil*, Burton had once written, "Had I a choice of race, there is none to which I would more willingly belong than the Jewish..." During his lifetime, he had been a supporter, and admirer of Disraeli. Burton's problems with the Jewish usurers, and the subsequent problems they caused, turned him against the entire religious group. After writing *The Jew*, however, Burton shelved the manuscript.  

Burton went unemployed, and virtually penniless, until the Spring of 1872 when a British speculator offered Burton 2000 pounds to explore the sulphur resources of Iceland. Burton arrived in Iceland on June 8 and stayed there for three months. His reports showed the profitability of mining in Iceland, but the speculator eventually decided not to risk the venture. Burton's expeditions resulted in his publication of *Ultima Thule* (1875), an uninspired compilation of Icelandic history, geography, geology, and culture.  

91. Ibid., 265-6.  
The consulship at Trieste was vacated while Burton was in Iceland and Lord Granville urged Isabel to convince Burton to accept the post. The 600 pound salary was a definite demotion from Burton’s 1000 pound salary in Damascus. The Burtons had financial situation, however, necessitated acceptance. On October 24, 1872, Burton sailed for the the small port in Austria-Hungary. The Burtons divided their twenty-seven room dwelling in half. On Isabel’s side was constructed an altar and several rooms contained her prized religious collection. Burton’s side was eclectically decorated with souvenirs from his decades of travels. Throughout his half were scattered his 8000 volume library. In Burton’s massive study were eleven desks. Burton kept all his materials pertaining to a specific project at one desk. When he tired of working on one project, he would simply move to another desk, and another project.

Trieste was a relief for both Burton and Isabel. Burton’s duties were light and gave him much time to work on his books. Isabel soon made many friends and often entertained at their home. Burton was prolific during his time in Trieste. From 1872 to 1880, he published over 5800 pages of magazine articles and independent volumes. He continued with enthusiasm his hobby of archaeology. He joined with some of the greatest Italian archaeologists of his day in excavating some Etruscan ruins. His book on the subject, Etruscan Bologna (1876), received poor reviews.

93. Abdullah, 96.
but also earned him visits from prominent archaeologists such as Heinrich Schliemann. 94

Burton won a six-month leave to go back to India in 1875. He and Isabel embarked on New Year’s Eve 1875 for the Sindh. Burton began to write his autobiography on the trip. Isabel had just released her first book, *The Inner Life of Syria, Palestine, and the Holy Land*, to rave reviews in London. On the trip to India, she began her second: *A_E_I_Arabia_Egypt_India*. In India, Burton completed his notes for *Sind Revisited* (1877), a compilation of data from his *Sindes, or the Unhappy Valley* and updates from his return visit. On his return to Trieste in 1876, Burton stopped in Cairo to seek out his old friend Haji Wali. Wali had once told him of an unmined gold reserve in the Midian desert. Burton applied for an audience with the Khedive of Egypt, Ismail I, to finance an expedition. The Khedive refused and Burton returned to Trieste. Soon thereafter, the Khedive’s treasury defaulted on several loans. Desperate, the Khedive called for an audience with Burton in March 1877. Between March 1877 and April 1878, Burton, Wali, and George Maria, a French mining engineer, made two extended trips to the Midian. They found no significant gold deposits, and the Khedive refused to reimburse Burton for the expenses he had incurred on the expedition. While his geographical reports earned him praises from the Royal Geographical Society, Burton’s trip was a financial washout. Burton returned to Egypt in June 1879, after the abdication of Ismail I to try and regain his financial losses from "H. W. De Quatrefages, Burton on Tinnis Trip," Fortunatelly 94, *Farwell*, 391.
the new Khedive, Tewfik Pasha. His entreaties were ignored, however, and Burton returned to Trieste.

Still searching for gold, Burton travelled to the Gold Coast of Africa in November 1881. With James Irvine and V. Lovett Cameron, he searched the Kong mountains in vain. Burton's second mining venture ended as fruitlessly as the first. After only two months, he returned to Trieste in failure.

In addition to his mining failures, Burton's writings were failing as well. His poorly written books on his mining operations The Gold Mines of the Midian (1878), Land of the Midian (1879), and To the Gold Coast (1883) were financial disasters.

His attempts at writing and translating poetry The Kasidah (1880), The Lusiads (1880), and Camoens: His Life and His Lusiads were uniformly savaged by British reviewers. Even his brilliant Book of the Sword (1884) failed to sell well.

Burton's failures in both the mining and literary worlds took their toll on his health. In early 1884, he began to suffer from painful attacks of gout. These were followed on March 14 by a heart attack. Burton's career seemed at an end.

Arabian Nights and Burton first collaborated in 1872-3 on the translation of the Stanzas of Love, which Burton made the first translation, which Burton modified, edited, and preferred. To avoid prosecution, the two men printed the work privately and used the reverse of their initials as pseudonyms. After only six copies were printed, the printer refused to print more.

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95. Hastings, 222.
From 1870 to 1890, Burton became obsessed with two objectives: translating the Arabian Nights and privately publishing the erotic works of the Arabs and Indians. The latter was quite dangerous. The British Obscene Publications Act of 1857 was rigidly enforced during this time. Prominent careers had ended due to the fines, imprisonment, and scandalous trials connected with the Act of 1857. Of 159 trials for obscenity, 154 ended in conviction. Burton had for years been interested in the sexual customs of non-Europeans and often included them in his manuscripts. Most of his references, however, were extracted by editors before publication. Since his first days in India, Burton had also amassed a wealth of oriental erotic literature. In the 1870s, he decided that it was time for these works to see print. He was joined in this conviction by a civil servant in India named F. Fitzgerald Arbuthnot.

Arbuthnot and Burton first collaborated in 1872-3 on the Ananga Ranga, or Hindu Art of Love. Arbuthnot made the first translation, which Burton modified, edited, and prefaced. To avoid prosecution, the two men printed the work privately and used the reverse of their initials as pseudonyms. After only six copies were made, however, the printer refused to print more copies. On Burton's trip to India in 1876, the two men...

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98. Ibid., 290.
collaborated on a translation of the famous Hindu manual, The Kama Sutra. It was finally published with the help of Monckton Milnes in 1883. In order to avoid prosecution for obscenity, Burton and Arbuthnot retained the Hindu terms for the sexual organs. The Kama Sutra was a success and emboldened the translators. They formed the Kama Shastra society as a way to print their works privately, but not secretly. In 1885, the two men rereleased the Ananga Ranga, which became a mild success. Burton then published a third, more explicit text, The Perfumed Garden, in 1886. 99

It was also at this time that Burton began his most famous achievement, a complete translation of the Arabian Nights. His was not to be the first translation of the Nights. Antoine Galland had first brought part of the Nights to Europe in the early 18th century. These were chopped versions that contained little of the original content of the Nights' tales. As early as 1852, Burton proclaimed his desire to translate the Arabian Nights, but he never attempted a translation until 1881. In that year, he was informed that John Payne was going to release a translation of the stories in 1882. Burton immediately wrote to Payne wishing him luck and offering his aid. Payne respected Burton and offered to collaborate with him and share the royalties. Burton then offered to assist, but refused payment. 100

Burton found Payne to be a competent, but timid, translator. Payne had a gift for translating poetry, but lacked the audacity to print the Nights without changing the racier sections. While

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100. Brodie, 302.
Burton respected Payne's translation, he became determined to print a truly faithful rendition of the Nights. Meanwhile, Payne's volumes were released in 1882 to widely varied reviews. His private printing of 500 copies were soon bought out and quickly became collector's items. Burton thrust himself into his translation and Isabel thrust herself into its promotion. She printed 34,000 handbills advertising Burton's 10 volume work. The Burtons promised to print 1000 copies for subscribers only. The subscribers, however, quickly reached 2000 in number.

Despite his heart attack in 1884, Burton continued to work furiously at his translation, comparing it to four separate versions in Arabic as well as to Payne's English translation. Burton's 10-volume A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, Now Entitled The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, With Introductory Explanatory Notes on the Manners and Customs of Moslem Men and a Terminal Essay Upon the History of the Nights was released in 1885. Burton, in addition to translating a larger number of tales than Payne, added voluminous footnotes. In these notes, Burton placed all the sexual ethnographic data that he possessed. Burton's translations were quite literal and included long treatments of homosexuality—the greatest taboo in Victorian England—written with delicacy and taste.

Burton's translation was a critical success. Most reviewers adored his volumes as a masterpiece. Only highly fundamental journals such as the Echo, and Burton's most critical reviewer, The Edinburgh Review attacked his work. The Nights were a financial success as well, and led Burton to release The
Supplemental Nights: in eight more volumes in 1886.

There has been much debate following Burton's translation concerning its similarities to Payne's translation. Thomas Wright wrote biographies of both men in an attempt to show that Burton's work plagiarized Payne's. Indeed, many passages of Burton's work do closely match Payne's passages, yet it still seems unlikely that Burton blatantly copied Payne's work verbatim. There are several explanations that can defend Burton adequately. Norman Penzer points out that when viewing both Payne's and Burton's translations of Aladdin one finds the same frequency of similar passages despite the fact that Burton's translation in 1887 preceded Payne's by two years. Two translations of the same work into the same language when both men collaborated on the first translation are bound to be remarkably similar. February 5, 1902.

Burton did take notes on all Payne's translations, but went to painstaking lengths to translate the Arabic faithfully. Burton's book is often more lively and includes the original racy situations often left out by Payne. Burton also translated seventy-eight stories that Payne did not. It would be impossible for Burton to plagiarize something of Payne's that did not exist.

Finally, Burton and Payne, in their respective introductions, each profusely thanked the other for his aid. Payne dedicated the final volume of his translation to Burton. Burton admitted his indebtedness to Payne. Despite Payne's admirers' claims of

101. Ibid., 309, 311.
plagiarism, Payne did not perceive Burton’s translation as such. In Payne’s 1889 translation of *Aladdin* (four years after Burton’s *Nights*), he again dedicated a book to Burton with the following message:

"I give myself the pleasure of placing your name in the forefront of another and final volume of my translation of the Thousand and One Nights, which, if it have brought me no other good has at least been the means of procuring me your friendship." 103

These were scarcely the words of a man who feels that he has been wrongfully plagiarized. If Payne does not indicate plagiarism, who else rightfully can?

Burton was finally internationally recognized. His fame awakened his hopes for a better Foreign Office post. His hopes were further aided by a telegram he received on February 5, 1886. It was from the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury. He had recommended to the Queen that Burton be made Sir Richard Burton, Knight Commander of Saint Michael and Saint George. While Burton did not receive a new post, Lord Salisbury granted him extended leaves from his post in gratitude for a lifetime of service to the Crown. Burton used his extended leaves frequently. He and Isabel travelled across Europe and made frequent trips back to London and Boulogne.

As his personal popularity rose, however, his health failed. Burton’s bouts with gout became ever harsher and he began to suffer from circulatory problems. Burton had a second heart attack while on leave in Cannes, France in February 1887. There

103. quoted in Brodie, 342.
physician and constant companion until Burton's death. Isabel, afraid that Burton would soon die, pressured him in vain to continue his memoirs. Instead, Burton continued to translate voraciously. He completed a group of Neapolitan folktales—Il Pentamerone in 1888 and progressed to risque Latin and Italian poems. Burton then began to translate the "pillow book" that he would eventually consider his magnum opus: The Scented Garden, a rework of The Perfumed Garden with additional, previously missing material. In December 1889, he travelled to Tunis to consult with Arabs on the translation.

Throughout 1890, Burton's health continued to worsen. He finished The Scented Garden in the summer and began once again to work on his memoirs. On October 20, 1890, Burton died suddenly in the night with an attack of gout. Isabel had servants find a priest. She then lied to Father Pietro Martelani and told him that Burton had professed Catholicism before his death. Martelani then gave Burton the extreme unction. Two days later, Burton was given an official funeral in Trieste.

Isabel asked the Dean of Westminster to bury Burton at Westminster Abbey, but because of his controversial life, she was denied. Instead, she had an 18-foot tall, 12-foot square tomb in the shape of an Arab tent


106. Brodie, 324.

erected at Mortlake cemetery in London at a cost of over 700 pounds. The tomb was erected, and Burton's body was finally laid to rest on June 15, 1891.

Isabel then took up the task of editing Burton's voluminous journals and manuscripts. Under the guidance of religious advisors, she burned the only copy of The_Scented_Garden to the massive disapproval of Burton's family, friends, and fellow scholars. She kept his diaries and journals long enough to write her own 1200-page biography of her husband, Life_of_Captain_Sir Richard_Francis_Burton and then burned them as well. Today, only nineteen pages of Burton's thousands of pages of diaries and journals are still in existence. It has been conjectured that Isabel burned her husband's journals in an effort to hide his dissatisfaction with her. It has also been proposed that Burton's journals detailed homosexual relationships with Monckton Milnes and Algernon Swinburne. Neither hypothesis can be proven, nor can either be discarded. Only Isabel saw the pages of Burton's journals, and she never told anyone of their contents. The information in them died with her on March 21, 1896.

108. Brodie, 327.

Burton's accomplishments are varied. Never before or since has one man been so adept at such a wide variety of occupations. Explorer, surveyor, soldier, linguist, poet, historian, ethnographer, orator, scientist, archaeologist, writer, traveller, and diplomat Burton mastered each field and moved on to master another.

To say that Burton was a genius is to state the obvious. Whether his friend or his enemy, no one could deny the man's superior intelligence. Yet, it would seem that this superiority constantly put roadblocks in Burton's path. Less capable men in higher positions often held Burton back when he could have excelled. Christopher Rigby, Roderick Murchison, Rashid Pasha, and Henry Elliot were just a few of the many men of limited ability who thwarted Burton's unlimited potential. Burton endured the obstacles and eventually surmounted most of them. Before his death, Burton had travelled in five continents, written dozens of books, and seen a dozen places and done a dozen things that no European had ever done before.

Burton's drive was to find the truth, and he followed in its path wherever it led. This search was his life's work, a work he treasured, and in many ways, a work in which he succeeded.
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