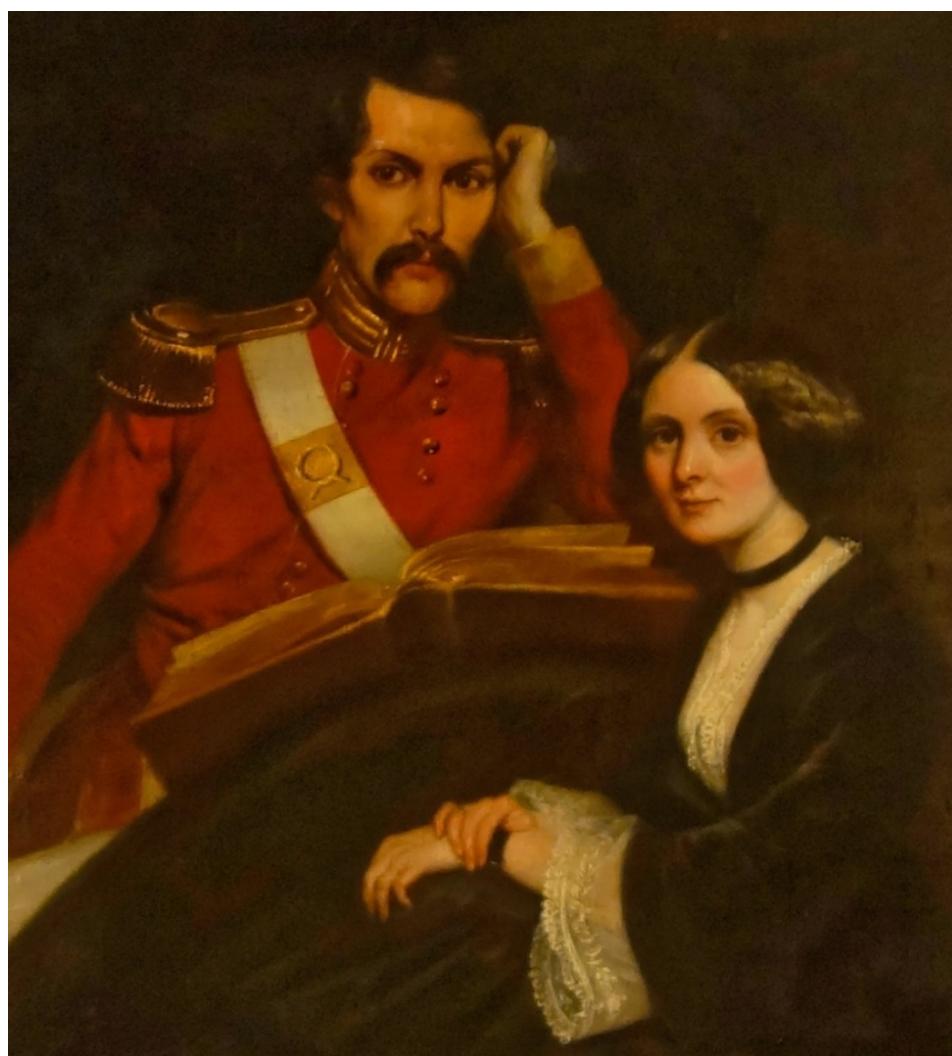


THE BOOK OF BURTONIANA VOLUME 1: 1841-1864



# The Book of Burtoniana



Letters & Memoirs of Sir Richard Francis Burton  
Volume 1: 1841-1864

Edited by Gavan Tredoux



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The Book of Burtoniana:

Volume 1: 1841-1864

Volume 2: 1865-1879

Volume 3: 1880-1924

Volume 4: Register and Bibliography

Front Image: Richard Francis Burton and his sister Maria, Boulogne 1852,  
by Claude Jacquand, courtesy of the Royal Anthropological Institute,  
London.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.therai.org.uk.>

## Preface.

This is a collection of Burtoniana: letters, reminiscences, diary entries, mentions and fugitive pieces, by or about Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890). For an overview of the life and work of Burton, with complete facsimiles of all of his books and articles, see <http://burtoniana.org>.

Although there are many biographies of Burton, none is completely satisfactory, and primary sources are badly needed. To date there have only been two brief collections of correspondence: an unpublished M.A. thesis by Donald Young, written in 1979, and a selection of documents about the Nile controversy from the collection of Quentin Keynes, edited by Donald Young and Quentin Keynes, published in a limited edition in 1999. This is not because of a lack of material.

While Isabel Burton burned in stages—partly in Trieste, partly in London—almost all of her husband's correspondence, along with his diaries and a number of his manuscripts, she could not burn the letters he had sent to other people. Therefore the letters we now have contain hardly any received by Burton himself, apart from scattered instances where he pasted letters he received into copies of books in his library, or collated them for use in ongoing projects, like the *Book of the Sword*, which survived Isabel's moral scrutiny. From references in the letters which do survive, it is obvious that Isabel burnt a vast correspondence, of which the extant portion is just a small sample. Even so, there are still enough letters *from* Burton to fill multiple volumes.

The mania for collecting Burtoniana has meant that a lot of the known correspondence is now secreted away in private collections—the auction catalogues are full of examples at ransom-like prices. Occasionally this material finds its way into archives where it can be accessed, such as the Huntington Library, where the Edwards Metcalfe collection was deposited; the British Library, where the Quentin Keynes Collection of manuscripts is now available for use; the National Library of Scotland, where the Grant papers, which contain several letters to and from John Hanning Speke and C. P. Rigby, are held; Durham University, where the Wylde family papers, which contain a trove of letters from Burton to William Henry Wylde, have been deposited; and the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, where the Arundell papers, which contain the residue of the items that Isabel had custody of and did not burn or have burnt, reside. **Private collectors who have correspondence or any manuscripts—this means you—are**

**encouraged, or rather exhorted, to contribute copies to this project, which is ongoing.**

The scope here is considerably broader than traditional collections of letters, as it includes other documents, and relevant mentions of Burton and his concerns in correspondence between third parties. In this spirit, there is an extensive selection of correspondence between John Hanning Speke, C. P. Rigby, J. A. Grant and others, as well as a large tranche of correspondence by Isabel.

Most of the material here has never been published before, or has appeared in fragmented form only, often garbled by transcription errors. Commentary is supplied where necessary to explain obscurities and identify references. A Register is also provided in Volume 4 with more details on the principal figures referred to.

The letters and documents are arranged chronologically in the first three volumes. Reminiscences which refer to an identifiable time period appear there. General reminiscences and assessments of Burton written after his death appear by their publication date.

The selection of letters is comprehensive and includes the core of the correspondence involving Burton that is known to survive and can still be located, but it does not aim to be complete—many more letters are known to exist, and this collection may grow to include them in future editions. Similarly, though the reminiscences collected here include nearly all the substantial first-hand accounts of Burton that have emerged to date, there are surely more to be discovered.

A fourth volume contains a Register of people referred to, with biographical overviews and details of their connections to Burton. There is also a detailed chronology of events to allow contexts to be anchored correctly, and a bibliography.

All volumes contain a selection of images, including colour plates, many of which have never, or seldom, been published in the form given here. These include the paintings made at Trieste by Albert Letchford, unpublished sketches by Burton himself, and many other rarities. Together with these, images long familiar to aficionados appear with much higher fidelity than they have before.

All letters reproduced here have been transcribed, wherever possible, from the original manuscripts or images of them. There are only a few cases in which the originals could not be traced. The text is given as closely as possible to the original, without unnecessary pedantry about their physical layout. Where text could not be recovered, because it is illegible or missing, the “[...]” ellipsis convention is used. Doubtful transcriptions appear inside brackets, e.g. “[Reclaimer]”. Wherever possible, translations of foreign phrases have been supplied—modern readers do not have the kind of education that Burton could assume his audience had.

Finally, *caveat emptor*—or reader beware. It is all too easy to make mistakes in this kind of work. Burton’s handwriting started out illegible and only got worse with age, shrinking and cramping. At times, Isabel’s writing is even worse. During the compilation of this series it became obvious early on that confidence in transcriptions required careful resolution of references and cross-comparison with other sources. While this raises confidence considerably, it cannot eliminate all transcription errors, let alone all the sundry other errors that creep into precise work of this kind. Readers must either accept this stoically, or supply their lists of errata as part payment.

Gavan Tredoux

July 2016.



# Contents.

PREFACE.....	I
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	XIII
<b>1841-1854 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. 1841. E. A. FREEMAN.....	1
2. 1842/03/05. P. WYNTER.....	1
3. 1842. DOUGLAS SLADEN.....	2
4. 1842-1851. MILITARY RECORD.....	3
5. 1844/08/-? WILLIAM NAPIER TO CAPTAIN WALTER SCOTT.....	5
6. 1845/12. SCINDE ASSOCIATION.....	6
7. 1846/02/13. T. C. BLAGRAVE TO RICHARD BURTON.....	8
8. 1846/07/- . JOSEPH NETTERVILLE BURTON TO CAPTAIN WALTER SCOTT.....	10
9. 1846? ENSIGN ALLEN.....	12
10. 1847. WALTER ABRAHAM.....	13
11. 1847/12. PRINGLE REPORT.....	14
12. 1848/02/19. RICHARD BURTON TO THE BOMBAY TIMES.....	15
13. 1848/02/23. RICHARD BURTON TO THE BOMBAY TIMES.....	20
14. 1848/03/01. RICHARD BURTON TO THE BOMBAY TIMES.....	25
15. 1848/03/04. RICHARD BURTON TO THE BOMBAY TIMES.....	30
16. 1848/11/14. RICHARD BURTON TO SARAH BURTON.....	34
17. 1849? ANONYMOUS.....	36
18. 1850-1853. GEORGIANA STISTED.....	37
19. 1852/04/03. DR. FREDERICK LE MESURIER.....	40
20. 1852/07/18. FREDERICK HOCKLEY.....	40
21. 1852/10/18. DR. P. BENNETT LUCAS TO JAMES MELVILLE.....	41
22. 1852/10/18. DR. ARCHIBALD COLQUHOUN TO JAMES MELVILLE.....	41
23. 1852/10/22. RICHARD BURTON TO JAMES MELVILLE.....	41
24. 1852/11/- . RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	42
25. 1852. RICHARD BURTON TO DR. JOHN ELLIOTSON.....	43
26. 1853/-/- . RICHARD BURTON TO GEORGE BELLAS GREENOUGH.....	47
27. 1853/01/- . RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	48
28. 1853/02/12. RICHARD BURTON TO THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.....	48
29. 1853/03/02. RICHARD BURTON TO SIR CHARLES NAPIER.....	49
30. 1853/03/- . RICHARD BURTON TO FRANCIS GALTON.....	50
31. 1853/04/03. FREDERICK HOCKLEY.....	50
32. 1853. BERNARD QUARITCH.....	51
33. 1853/10/16. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS.....	53
34. 1853/10/- . RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	55
35. 1853/11/16. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	56
36. 1853/12/17. FREDERICK HOCKLEY.....	60
37. 1853/12/15. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	61

38.	1853. ALI THE PILOT VIA JOSEPH PARKINSON .....	62
39.	1854. CHARLES DIDIER .....	62
40.	1854. JAMES HAMILTON.....	68
41.	1854. EDWIN DE LEON .....	69
42.	1854/05/22. LORD ELLESMORE.....	71
43.	1854/10/10. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO CAPTAIN WILLIAM E. HAY. ....	71
44.	1854/10/12. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO JAMES AUGUSTUS GRANT.....	73
45.	1854/03/—. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO JAMES AUGUSTUS GRANT. ....	74
46.	1854. GEORGIANA STISTED .....	76
<b>1855-1859 .....</b>	<b>78</b>	
47.	1855/-/—? COLONEL JOHN STUDHOLME HODGSON TO MONCKTON MILNES... .	78
48.	1855/02/18. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM M. COGHLAN.....	81
49.	1855/02/21. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM M. COGHLAN.....	82
50.	1855/02/23. RICHARD BURTON TO RICHARD BENTLEY.....	83
51.	1855/02/25. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	84
52.	1855/04/23. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM M. COGHLAN.....	86
53.	1855/04/22. G. E. HERNE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	94
54.	1855/04/—. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON.....	95
55.	1855/06/—. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	98
56.	1855/08/18. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	98
57.	1855/09/21. J. H. SKENE TO STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE. ....	101
58.	1855. EDWARD MONEY. ....	104
59.	1855/12/06. RICHARD BURTON TO <i>THE TIMES</i> .....	106
60.	1856. FRANCIS GALTON.....	111
61.	1856/03/05. GENERAL VIVIAN TO LORD PANMURE.....	112
62.	1856/03/28. LIEUT.-COLONEL EUGENE O'REILLY TO MAJOR-GENERAL SMITH. .	113
63.	1856/03/28. MAJOR EDWARD SHELLEY TO GENERAL SMITH.....	115
64.	1856/04/—. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS. ....	115
65.	1856/04/06. GENERAL SMITH TO LORD PANMURE.....	116
66.	1856/04/19. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS. ....	118
67.	1856/05/—? RICHARD BURTON TO SIR GEORGE BACK. ....	122
68.	1856/05/28. RICHARD BURTON TO GENERAL WILLIAM BEATSON. ....	122
69.	1856/06/—? RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	128
70.	1856/08/—? RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	128
71.	1856/-/—. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	129
72.	1856/09/07. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	129
73.	1856/09/30. HEINRICH BARTH TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	130
74.	1856/11/05. SAMUEL SHEPHEARD. ....	130
75.	1856/11/14. RICHARD BURTON TO THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.....	131
76.	1856/11/14. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS. ....	132
77.	1856/12/28. RICHARD BURTON TO COMMANDER WILLIAM BALFOUR. ....	133
78.	1857/01/02. RGS TO RICHARD BURTON.....	134

79.	1857/01/05. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS.....	135
80.	1857/04/02. FREDERICK HANKEY TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	136
81.	1857/04/09. RICHARD BURTON TO SIR GEORGE BACK. ....	139
82.	1857/04/22. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS.....	141
83.	1857/04/27. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES. ....	148
84.	1857/04/—. RICHARD BURTON TO UNKNOWN. ....	150
85.	1857/05/—. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO GEORGIANA SPEKE. ....	151
86.	1857/05/20. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RGS.....	152
87.	1857/08/02. FRANCIS GALTON TO RICHARD BURTON.....	158
88.	1857/09/06. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	159
89.	1857/09/06. RICHARD BURTON TO ATKINS HAMERTON.....	160
90.	1857/10/—. RICHARD BURTON TO THE BRITISH CONSUL AT ZANZIBAR. ....	161
91.	1858/01/14. BURTON AND SPEKE DISMISS THE "SONS OF RAMJI".....	163
92.	1858/06/24. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS.....	163
93.	1858/07/02. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RGS.....	166
94.	1858/07/02. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW.....	167
95.	1858/12/07. RICHARD BURTON TO BOMBAY GOVERNMENT.....	169
96.	1859/01/01. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS.....	170
97.	1859/01/06. FREDERICK HANKEY TO MONCKTON MILNES. ....	171
98.	1859/02/05. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS.....	174
99.	1859/03/19. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS.....	175
100.	1859/03/21. JOHANNES REBmann TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	175
101.	1859/03/26. C. P. RIGBY TO CAPTAIN JOHN MILES. ....	177
102.	1859/04/06. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	177
103.	1859/04/18. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RGS.....	178
104.	1859/04/19. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS.....	179
105.	1859/04/20. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	180
106.	1859/—/—. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	181
107.	1859/05/08. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW. ....	181
108.	1859/—/—? RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES. ....	182
109.	1859/05/19. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RGS.....	183
110.	1859/06/09. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW. ....	184
111.	1859/06/17. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	185
112.	1859/06/20. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	187
113.	1859/07/22. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO BLACKWOOD. ....	189
114.	1859/08/06. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANCIS GALTON. ....	190
115.	1859/—/—? JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	190
116.	1859/08/15. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES. ....	191
117.	1859/08/15. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS. ....	191
118.	1859/09/02. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO BLACKWOOD. ....	192
119.	1859/09/03. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	193
120.	1859/09/06. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	195
121.	1859/09/07. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANCIS GALTON. ....	195
122.	1859/09/08. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	196

123.	1859/09/10. C. P. RIGBY TO RICHARD BURTON.....	196
124.	1859/10/07. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	198
125.	1859/10/—. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS. ....	198
126.	1859/10/13. RICHARD BURTON TO RGS. ....	199
127.	1859/10/17. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	200
128.	1859/10/28. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW. ....	203
129.	1859/11/03. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	204
130.	1859/11/—? JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW. ....	205
131.	1859/11/—. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	206
132.	1859/11/25. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	207
133.	1859/12/02. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	209
134.	1859/12/01. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO BOMBAY GOVERNMENT. ....	210
135.	1859/12/—? RICHARD BURTON TO JOHN HANNING SPEKE. ....	217
136.	1859. GEORGIANA STISTED. ....	218
<b>1860-1864.</b>	<b>.....</b>	<b>219</b>
137.	1860. JOHN HANNING SPEKE.....	219
138.	1860. FRANCIS GALTON.....	219
139.	1860/01/—? JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW. ....	221
140.	1860/01/16. RICHARD BURTON TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	221
141.	1860/01/16. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW. ....	223
142.	1860/01/17. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW. ....	223
143.	1860/01/19. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	225
144.	1860/01/22. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	227
145.	1860/02/01. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	228
146.	1860/02/03. RICHARD BURTON TO JOHN HANNING SPEKE. ....	229
147.	1860/02/06. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW. ....	230
148.	1860/02/07. NORTON SHAW TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	231
149.	1860/02/07. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	232
150.	1860/02/09. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	233
151.	1860/02/10. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	234
152.	1860/02/10. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO NORTON SHAW. ....	235
153.	1860/02/16. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	236
154.	1860/—/—? RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	237
155.	1860/04/10. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	237
156.	1860/04/10. RICHARD BURTON TO JOHN HANNING SPEKE. ....	238
157.	1860/04/16. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO RICHARD BURTON. ....	238
158.	1860/04/18. RICHARD BURTON TO JOHN HANNING SPEKE. ....	239
159.	1860/04/22. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	240
160.	1860/—/03. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	240
161.	1860/10/—. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	243
162.	1860/10/02. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	244
163.	1860/10/06. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY. ....	246

164.	1860/10/22. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY.....	248
165.	1860/08. RICHARD WALDEN HALE.....	252
166.	1860. AMELIA RANSOME NEVILLE.....	255
167.	1861-1865. ERNEST PERCIVAL RHYS.....	255
168.	1861. ERNEST PERCIVAL RHYS.....	260
169.	1861/01/07. GUSTAV MANN.....	262
170.	1861/01/09. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.....	262
171.	1861. ARTHUR SYMONS.....	264
172.	1861/-/-? RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	264
173.	1861/02/01. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO BLACKWOOD.....	264
174.	1861/03/20. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	266
175.	1861. GEORGINA STISTED.....	267
176.	1861/03/28. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY.....	268
177.	1861/05/12. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO C. P. RIGBY.....	269
178.	1861/06/09? RICHARD BURTON TO LUKE BURKE.....	272
179.	1861? LAURA FRISWELL.....	273
180.	1861/06/15? ISABEL BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL.....	273
181.	1861/07/05. FREDERICK HOCKLEY.....	274
182.	1861/07/06. RICHARD BURTON TO <i>THE TIMES</i> .....	275
183.	1861/08/02. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	276
184.	1861/08/28. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	277
185.	1861/10/01. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	278
186.	1861/10/25. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	283
187.	1861/11/-? ISABEL BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL.....	292
188.	1861. LAURA FRISWELL.....	293
189.	1861/12/01. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	295
190.	1861/12/13. GUSTAV MANN.....	297
191.	1861/12/16. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	297
192.	1862/01/04? ISABEL BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL.....	300
193.	1862/01/11. ISABEL BURTON TO NORTON SHAW [1].....	303
194.	1862/01/11. ISABEL BURTON TO NORTON SHAW [2].....	306
195.	1862/01/20. MONCKTON MILNES TO C. J. MACCARTHY.....	307
196.	1862/01/27. HENRY ASTBURY LEVESON.....	308
197.	1862/02/19. RICHARD BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL.....	308
198.	1862/03/-? ISABEL BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	309
199.	1862/03/01. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	309
200.	1862/03/15? ISABEL BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	311
201.	1862/03/17. ISABEL BURTON TO NORTON SHAW.....	312
202.	1862/04/-? ISABEL BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL.....	312
203.	1862/04/02. RICHARD BURTON TO SIR JAMES RANALD MARTIN.....	313
204.	1862/04/17. ISABEL BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL.....	314
205.	1862/04/18? ISABEL BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL.....	315
206.	1862/04/26. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	315
207.	1862/04/27. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	318

208.	1862/04/27. HENRY ASTBURY LEVESON.....	320
209.	1862/04/28. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE. ....	320
210.	1862/05/10? RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON. ....	321
211.	1862/05/22. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE. ....	322
212.	1862/-/-? RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON. ....	325
213.	1862/05/25. RICHARD BURTON TO JAMES HUNT.....	325
214.	1862/06/23. RICHARD BURTON TO HENRY A. MURRAY. ....	326
215.	1862/07/12. JOSEPH DALTON HOOKER TO SIR RODERICK MURCHISON.....	330
216.	1862/09/26. RICHARD BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	336
217.	1862/09/26. ISABEL BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	337
218.	1862/11/—. ISABEL BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	338
219.	1862/11/08. GUSTAV MANN.....	338
220.	1862/11/12. JOSEPH DALTON HOOKER TO CHARLES DARWIN. ....	338
221.	1862/11/18. CHARLES DARWIN TO JOSEPH DALTON HOOKER. ....	339
222.	1862/12/01. ISABEL BURTON TO NORTON SHAW. ....	339
223.	1862/12/—? RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES. ....	340
224.	1862/12/20. GUSTAV MANN TO SIR WILLIAM JACKSON HOOKER. ....	341
225.	1862/12/22. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON. ....	343
226.	1862/12/22. RICHARD BURTON TO <i>THE TIMES</i> . ....	345
227.	1862/12/23? RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	346
228.	1862/-/-? ISABEL BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL. ....	346
229.	1862/-/12? ISABEL BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL. ....	347
230.	1862/12/29? RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON. ....	348
231.	186/-/-? ISABEL BURTON TO JAMES HAIN FRISWELL. ....	348
232.	1862. JOHN PASSMORE EDWARDS.....	349
233.	1862. LAURA HAIN FRISWELL. ....	349
234.	1862. HENRY SUTHERLAND EDWARDS.....	351
235.	1863/01/09. WILLIAM BABINGTON TO SIR WILLIAM HOOKER.....	352
236.	1863/01/—? RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON. ....	353
237.	1863/01/—? RICHARD BURTON TO HENRY A. MURRAY.....	353
238.	1863/01/—? RICHARD BURTON TO HENRY A. MURRAY.....	354
239.	1863/01/20. RICHARD BURTON TO HENRY A. MURRAY. ....	356
240.	1863/01/31. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON. ....	357
241.	1863/02/17. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE. ....	358
242.	1863/02/17. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	359
243.	1863/02/26. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO FRANCIS GALTON. ....	361
244.	1863/03/29. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	362
245.	1863/05/07. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	365
246.	1863/05/31. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.....	367
247.	1863/05/31. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	368
248.	1863/06/05. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.....	370
249.	1863/06/18. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.....	371
250.	1863/06/26. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO THE EDITOR OF <i>THE TIMES</i> . ....	371

251.	1863/06/26? RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON.....	372
252.	1863/06/27. RICHARD BURTON TO C. GEORGE.....	372
253.	1863/-/. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	373
254.	1863/07/02. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	374
255.	1863/07/24. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.....	375
256.	1863/10/25. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	377
257.	1863/10/25. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	379
258.	1863/12/07. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.....	381
259.	1863/12/24. JOHN HANNING SPEKE.....	383
260.	1863/12/24. P. B. M'QUIE TO THE EDITOR OF <i>THE TIMES</i> .....	387
261.	1863/12/28. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO THE EDITOR OF <i>THE TIMES</i> .....	388
262.	1863/12/30. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON.....	389
263.	1863/12/30. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	390
264.	1864/01/14. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO <i>THE ATHENAEUM</i> .....	392
265.	1864/01/29. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	393
266.	1864/-/15? RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON.....	394
267.	1864/-/-? RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON.....	395
268.	1864/03/04. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	396
269.	1864/03/24. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	398
270.	1864/03/25. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO BLACKWOOD.....	400
271.	1864/03/25. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	401
272.	1864/04/18. RICHARD BURTON TO <i>THE ATHENAEUM</i> .....	402
273.	1864/04/19. GEORGE PAULL.....	404
274.	1864/05/-? RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON.....	407
275.	1864/05/03. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO THE EDITOR OF <i>THE TIMES</i> .....	409
276.	1864/05/31. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO AUSTEN HENRY LAYARD.....	409
277.	1864/05/26. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.....	410
278.	1864/06/02? RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON.....	411
279.	1864/06/14. RICHARD BURTON TO WILLIAM HENRY WYLDE.....	411
280.	1864/06/14. ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE MINUTES.....	412
281.	1864/06/30. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON.....	413
282.	1864/07/01. RODERICK MURCHISON TO AUSTEN HENRY LAYARD.....	415
283.	1864/07/06. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO BLACKWOOD.....	416
284.	1864/07/25. JOHN HANNING SPEKE TO BLACKWOOD.....	417
285.	1864. ARTHUR SYMONS.....	418
286.	1864/08/12? RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	418
287.	1864/08/23. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON.....	419
288.	1864. ÁRMIN VÁMBÉRY.....	419
289.	1864/09/17. MELANCHOLY DEATH OF CAPT. SPEKE.....	420
290.	1864/09/19. JOSEPH DALTON HOOKER TO CHARLES DARWIN.....	422
291.	1864/09/21. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON.....	422
292.	1864/09/23. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.....	424
293.	1864. FRANCIS GALTON.....	424
294.	1864. A. H. SAYCE.....	425

295.	1864/09/23. RICHARD BURTON TO <i>THE TIMES</i> .....	426
296.	1864. MARY CLARKE MOHL.....	427
297.	1864/10/12. RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	427
298.	1864/—/—? RICHARD BURTON TO MONCKTON MILNES.....	428
299.	1864/11/10. RICHARD BURTON TO J. B. FERGUSON.....	429
300.	1864/11/14. FRANCIS GALTON ON NILOTIC DISCOVERIES.....	432
301.	1864/11/14. RICHARD BURTON ON NILOTIC DISCOVERIES.....	434
302.	1864/11/20. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON. ....	435
303.	1864/12/10. FRANCIS GALTON IN <i>THE READER</i> . ....	436
304.	1864/12/16. RICHARD BURTON TO <i>THE READER</i> . ....	439
305.	1864/11/06. C. P. RIGBY TO JAMES AUGUSTUS GRANT. ....	440
306.	1864/12/21. RICHARD BURTON TO FRANK WILSON. ....	442
<b>INDEX TO AUTHORS AND CORRESPONDENTS. ....</b>		<b>449</b>
<b>PLATES. ....</b>		<b>451</b>
<b>CREDITS.....</b>		<b>462</b>

## List of Illustrations.

FIGURE 1. <i>BOMBAY TIMES</i> 1848/02/19. ....	18
FIGURE 2. <i>BOMBAY TIMES</i> 1848/02/23. ....	23
FIGURE 3. <i>BOMBAY TIMES</i> 1848/03/01. ....	28
FIGURE 4. <i>BOMBAY TIMES</i> 1848/03/03. ....	33
FIGURE 5. CARICATURES BY BURTON OF INDIAN ARMY ASSOCIATES. ....	37
FIGURE 6. BURTON IN THE EARLY 1850s. ....	43
FIGURE 7. A PILGRIM, POSSIBLY BY BURTON. ....	52
FIGURE 8. SELF-PORTRAIT AS PILGRIM WITH MOCK CROWN. ....	53
FIGURE 9. THE ORIGINAL “SLUG MAP” BY ERHARDT AND REBMANN. ....	77
FIGURE 10. SURGEON’S REPORT AFTER THE FATAL INCIDENT AT BERBERAH. ....	86
FIGURE 11. MONCKTON MILNES. ....	150
FIGURE 12. PAGES FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	154
FIGURE 13. WESTERN SKETCHES BY BURTON. ....	242
FIGURE 14. MORMON ENDOWMENT HOUSE AND TABERNACLE, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	243
FIGURE 15. DR. GEORGE BIRD. ....	260
FIGURE 16. FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE, 1861, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	278
FIGURE 17. CAPE PALMAS, 1861, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	283
FIGURE 18. CAPE COAST CASTLE, 1861, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	283
FIGURE 19. THE CHURCH IN AKE, ABEOKUTA, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	286
FIGURE 20. MISSION COMPOUND, AKE, ABEOKUTA, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	286
FIGURE 21. THE ROCK ULUMO, 3RD NOVEMBER 1861, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	287
FIGURE 22. OGBONI LODGE IN ABEOKUTA, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	287
FIGURE 23. AN OPEN HUT AT OGBONI, ABEOKUTA, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	288
FIGURE 24. ‘PECULIAR FRUIT FLOURISHING AT ABEOKUTA’, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	289
FIGURE 25. THE ROCK IN AKE, NOVEMBER 3 <sup>RD</sup> 1861, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	290
FIGURE 26. ‘BITS OF CORAL IN NOSES’, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	291
FIGURE 27. WEST AFRICAN PORT—LAGOS?—FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	292
FIGURE 28. MAPANYE, 21 <sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 1861, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	300
FIGURE 29. ISABEL BURTON IN THE 1860s. ....	302
FIGURE 30. VIEW FROM MT. HELEN, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	304
FIGURE 31. IN THE CAMEROONS MOUNTAINS, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	304
FIGURE 32. VOLCANIC CRATER IN THE CAMEROONS MOUNTAINS, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	304
FIGURE 33. ANOTHER VIEW OF THE CRATER, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	305
FIGURE 34. VICTORIA MOUNTAIN, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	305
FIGURE 35. MOUNT ISABEL AND MOUNT HOOKER, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	305
FIGURE 36. THE DYKE, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	306
FIGURE 37. ALBERT CRATER, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	306
FIGURE 38. FORT VERONA, PRAMPRAM, GOLD COAST, 28TH JUNE 1862, FROM BURTON’S SKETCHBOOK. ....	329

FIGURE 39. THE ARM CHAIR, JULY 3RD 1862, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK.....	329
FIGURE 40. OLD MAMMY, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	331
FIGURE 41. CICATRIZED YOUNG WOMEN OF WARI, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	332
FIGURE 42. "THE CROSS IN DIFFICULTIES", WARI, 11 AUGUST 1862, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	332
FIGURE 43. BELZONI'S GRAVE, AUGUST 1862, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	332
FIGURE 44. BELZONI'S TREE, AUGUST 1862, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	333
FIGURE 45. LODGE IN BENIN, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	333
FIGURE 46. KING JAMBRA'S COMPOUND IN BENIN, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK.....	333
FIGURE 47. FEMALES OF BENIN, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	334
FIGURE 48. WOMAN AT WARI, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	334
FIGURE 49. FALAYE AND STOKES' MAMMY, BENIN, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK.....	335
FIGURE 50. MALE CITIZEN OF BENIN, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	335
FIGURE 51. HUMAN SACRIFICE ON THE ROAD TO BENIN, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK.....	336
FIGURE 52. BURTON'S LETTER TO FRANK WILSON 21 DECEMBER 1864. ....	444
FIGURE 53. DRAWING BY BURTON FOR <i>TWO TRIPS TO GORILLA LAND</i> . ....	448
FIGURE 54. A PAGE FROM BURTON'S MILITARY RECORD.....	452
FIGURE 55. 'JOHN BULL AND PERSIA'. SKETCHED BY BURTON ONBOARD THE "BENGAL" APRIL 1853. ....	453
FIGURE 56. BURTON IN CAIRO, DEC. 23 1853, BY EDWARD LEAR. ....	454
FIGURE 57. AN "OFFICER" OF THE BASHI-BAZOUKS. ....	455
FIGURE 58. WEDDING PORTRAIT BY LOUIS DESANGES: RFB. ....	456
FIGURE 59. WEDDING PORTRAIT BY LOUIS DESANGES: ISABEL. ....	457
FIGURE 60. THE GREAT SALT LAKE, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	458
FIGURE 61. SALT LAKE CITY, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	458
FIGURE 62. THE BRITISH CONSULATE ON THE HILL ABOVE THE BEACH AT FERNANDO PO, IN BURTON'S DAY.....	459
FIGURE 63. ABEOKUTA, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	460
FIGURE 64. SCENES FROM ABEOKUTA, IN BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	460
FIGURE 65. 'LITTLE CAMAROON MOUNTAIN' FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	461
FIGURE 66. PECULIAR DESCENT OF MT. HELEN, FROM BURTON'S SKETCHBOOK. ....	461