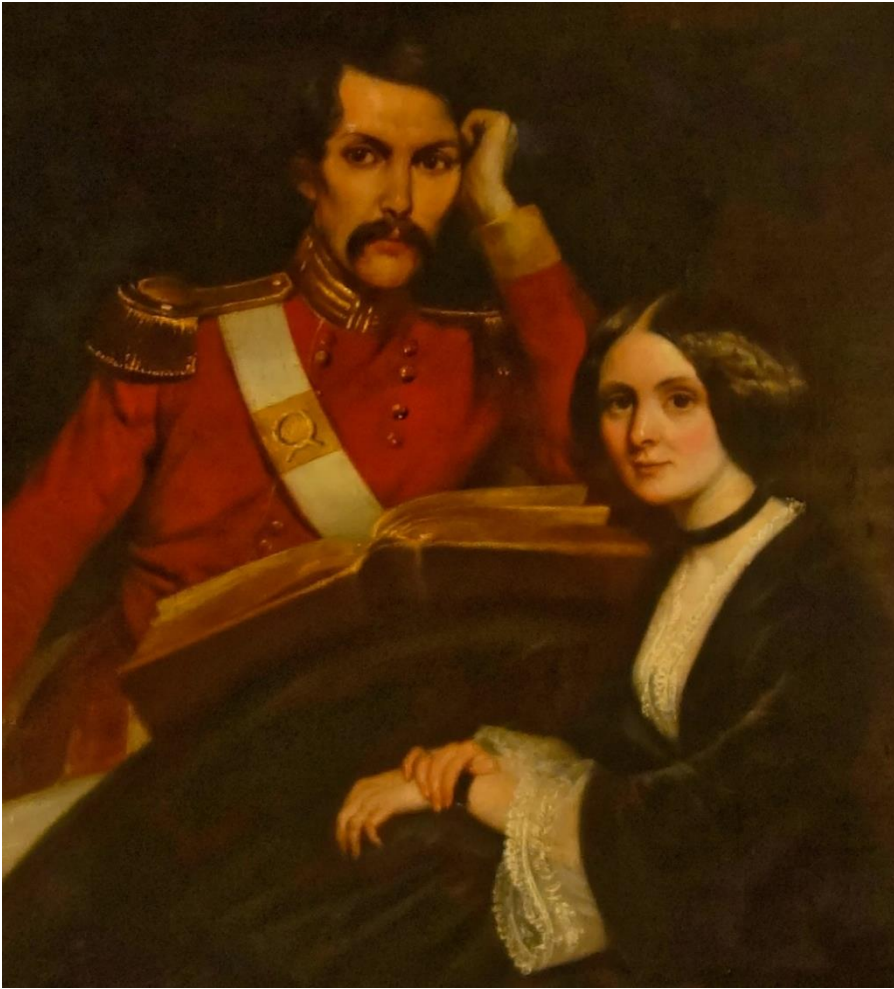


The Book of Burtoniana



Letters & Memoirs of Sir Richard Francis Burton

Volume 1: 1841-1861

Edited by Gavan Tredwell

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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

Cover Image: Richard Francis Burton and his sister Boulogne, 1852, by Claude Jacquand, courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society, London¹

¹ <https://www.therai.org.uk>

Preface

This is a collection of Burton letters, reminiscences, diary entries, mentions and fugitive pieces by or about Sir Richard Francis Burton (1831-1890). For an overview of the life and work of Burton, complete facsimiles of all of his books and articles see <http://burtoniana.org>

Although there are many biographies of Burton, completely satisfactory, and primary sources are badly needed. To date there have only been two brief collections of correspondence: an unpublished M.A. by Desmond Young, written in 1979, and a selection of documents about the Nile controversy from the collection of Quentin Keynes edited by Donald Young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 1989. This is not because of a lack of material.

While Isabel Burton read in stages, partly in Trieste, partly in London a number of his manuscripts, she could not burn the letters he had sent to other people. Therefore the letters we now have contain only what he 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*, or references in the letters which do survive. It is obvious that Isabel burnt a vast correspondence of which the extant portion is just a 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 high prices. Occasionally this material finds its way into archives where it can be accessed, 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 George Reidy; 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 corresponded to me, 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 Hanning Speke, P. Ruy, J.A. Grant and others, as well as a large tranche of correspondence by Isabel

Most of the material has never been published or has appeared in fragmented form and often garbled by transcription errors. Commentary is supplied where necessary to explain obscurities and identify references. A Register is also provided in Volume 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 appear there. General reminiscences and assessments of Burton after his death appear by their publication date.

The selection of letters is comprehensive and includes those of the correspondence involving Burton that is known to survive and still be located, but it does not aim to be complete. More letters are known to exist, and this collection may 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 overview and detail 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 before. These include the paintings made at Trieste by Albert Letchford, unpublished sketches by Burton himself, and many other rarities. Together with the long familiar *taficonados* 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 appearance.

Where the text convention is used. Doubtful transcriptions appear inside brackets, e.g. k ‡ eigh 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

with age-shrinking and cramping. It is even worse. During the compilation of this series it became obvious early on that confidence in transcriptions required careful resolution of references and comparisons with other sources. While this raises confidence considerably, it cannot eliminate transcription errors, let alone all the 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

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1841-1854

1. 1841. E. A. Freeman.

Freeman was educated at a small private school at Ewell, in Surrey, where Mr. Clements Markham was one of his contemporaries. But his intellectual life dates from his election to a scholarship at Trinity College, Oxford, in 1841, when he was not yet eight years old. At that time the academical society of an undergraduate was limited to college walls much more narrowly than it is now; and Freeman always attributed the influences that moulded his after career to the fellows and scholars of Trinity. The president was then Ingram, an Oxford antiquary; the tutors and lecturers were Wilson (Ingram's successor in the headship, and himself an antiquary), Thomas Short (the tutor of Newman, who survived to our own days), Isaac Williams, Copeland, and Hadden (a co-editor with Dr. Stubbs of *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*). Among the scholars whom Freeman found in residence were the present Lord Lingen, Basil Jones (Bishop of St. David's), Mountague Bernard, and Sir George Bowen; among his juniors were Father Coleridge, Gregory Smith, Sir George Cox, and Gifford.³ A commoner of the time was Sir Richard F. Burton, concerning whom Freeman used to say that, there was something in common between the two men.

2. 1842/03/05.P. Wynter.⁴

At a Meeting of the Vice Chancellor, Heads of Houses, and Proctors, in the Delegates' Room, March 1842 Whereas it has been announced by public

¹ Obituary E. A. Freeman *Academy* Vol. 41 No. 1038 (March 26, 1892) p. 301.

² "Archivist Mrs. Clare Hopkins to Mary Lovell (1906/1)

³ See Register for W. G. Palgrave.

⁴ *Oxford University Statutes* S. R. M. Ward and James Heywood (London: William Pickering, 1851). Burton left Oxford around March 12 1842, after, as he later recalled, attending a steep chase. The statute here shows that this alone would have led to a one-term rustication. *The Advertiser and Exchange Gazette* Friday 11 March 1842
8
Wales Handicap run on Tuesday of that week, which had apparently caused great

1842. Douglas Sladen.

advertisement that a steeple chase is about to take place in the
of Oxford; all persons are hereby admonished that the Penalties enacted by the
Statute hereunto subjoined will be enforced against those who after this public
notice, shall be found to have taken any part in the same.

P. Wynter,
Vice Chancellor.

Extract from the Statute, Tit. xv15Sect.

"It is also enacted, That no Scholar of the University shall be either principal or
party in a horserace, either by the act of riding himself or by engaging in any
subscription for the purpose, or in any other manner; nor shall he attend any
horserace, or in any way meddle therein, under the penalty of rustication from
the University during one term for the first offence; during a whole year, for the
second; and in the case of a third offence, for ever."

3. 1842. Douglas Sladen⁵

I had the good fortune to know some of the greatest of the authors who lived
Oxford when I was an undergraduate. I met Mr. Bishop Stubbs the historian,
Edward Augustus Freeman, Lewis Carroll, Dean Kitchin, Canon Bright and W. L.
#

Bishop Stubbs and Freeman were also Trinity men, and generally at the College
Gaudies, where the Scholars used to dine at the same table as the Dons and the
guests. Sir Richard Burton came once to a Gaudy when I was there, and told me
that he was very surprised that they had asked him, because he had been sent
down.

@
o o u

Oliver. See also *Oxford University and City Handbook* 12 March 1842.

⁵Douglas Sladen *Twenty Years of My Life* (New York: Dutton, 1913) pp. 9. See also
Douglas Sladen *My Long Life* (London: Hutchinson, 1939) p. 45.

4. 1842-1851. Military Record⁶

Richard Francis Burton

Dates of commissions as

Ensign⁷ 18 June 42

16 July 42

G.O.⁸ 15 Oct 42

Lieut 2nd 1st Jany 46

G.O. 31st

Nominated by J Lock Esq. on the recommendation of Joseph Hand Esq. L J Horne. Son of Captain Burton H.M.S. ~~Base~~ ^{Station} 221.

Posted to 18 N.I. G.O. 15 Octr 42. Admitted to the service at Bombay 28 Oct 42

G.O. 14 Nov 42. Leave from 1 April to 15 May to proceed to Bombay to undergo an examination in the Hindustani Language

G.O. 22 March 43 reported qualified to hold the situation of Interpreter in Hindustani

G.O. 5 May 43 Appointed to act as Interpreter to his corps

G.O. 10 Aug 43 Leave from 10 Sept to Oct to proceed to Bombay for purpose of undergoing an examination in the Guzerattee Language

G.O. 22 Aug 43 Reported qualified to hold the situation of Interpreter in Guzerattee

G.O. 23 March 44 Leave extended to 10 Nov to enable him to rejoin his station

G.O. 28 Oct 43 Reported qualified as an Intr. In Mahratta

⁶British Library, India Office Records. L/MIL/12/73.

⁷Second Lieutenant in modern terminology.

⁸General Order.

G.O. 22 Oct 44 Appd 2d Asst Surveyor Scinde from 15 Nov East Bengal

G.O. 2 May 45. Order dated Mahomed Khalanda, Hyderabad 1st Aug. 46 appointing him to act as Interpreter. N. to do confirmed

G. O. 3rd Sept 46. Leave extended to 31st to remain at the Residency on S.C.⁹

G.O. 1st Decr 46. Evinces a zeal for the service and zeal to his duties (as Lt.) highly creditable and is easily acquainted with Insp Rept of B.N.I.

6th Jan 47. Leave extended to 31st to remain at the Residency on S.C. [?] 2 Jan 47.

Leave further extended to 28th Feb 47.

Leave for two years to proceed to Netherby Hills on S.G.O. 12 Feb 47.

The unexpired portion cancelled from 30 ulto. the date of his return to the Res. G.O. 12 Oct 47

Appointed Assistant in the Scind Survey Dept. G.O. 23 Oct 47.

Reported qualified as a tr in the Persian language G.O. 12 Nov 47.

Evinces a zeal for the Service regularity and attention to duties highly creditable and is well acquainted as far as his experience enabled him to progress. Insp. Rep "Is reported to have passed in 4 native languages & has applied for a Committ. to examine him in the fifth. Govt. recommend that a donation of Rs 1000 similar to that post Lt. Rigby be granted to him.

[Public] from Bombay 19 July 48. No. 14. Sanctioned.

[Public] to Bbay 18 July 48. No. 165).

⁹Sick Certificate.

1845/08/? William Napier to Captain Walter Scott.

Reported to have passed more Native language (Scindee and Punjabee) addition to the four languages previously acquired.

[Public] from Bombay 28 Sept 48. No. 77.

Declared qualified to transact public business in the Scindee & Punjabee Languages. G.O. 7 Sept. G.O. 13 Dec. 48.

Evinces a zeal & attention to his duties, highly creditable. Insp. Rep. of 1848. I. 21 Feb 49 & 8 March 49. 25 March 1851, 1 & 2 of December 1851.

Leave from 12 March to 12 April 49. 29 March 49.

Allowed a Furlo to Europe on S.C. G.O. 27 March. 49 Commenced 30 March 49. Gaz 5 April 49 & 1st to

Submit for Co of a work which he is desirous of publishing on the Ethnography of Scinde M.C. 13 Nov 50.

Requests permission to dedicate it to Court M.C. 25 Feb 51.

Author of a Goa and the blue mountains north of sick U # U

Author of work entitled 'The Scindee & Ethnography of' 150 copies & are willing to accept the dedication of the work.

M.C. 23 July & 27 Aug 51.

Granted by Court a donation of £ 1000 for proficiency attained in 6 native languages G.O. 30 Sept 51.

5. 1845/08/? William Napier to Captain Walter Scott.

Private

19th August

¹⁰National Library of Scotland, MS 7178 f.96. ALS. Scott was in command of the Sindh/Scinde Survey.

1845/12. Scinde Association.

My dear Scott

The General says he is sorry that he cannot appoint Burton at present to the survey because he is under a cloud, which has not yet been cleared up.

He has been behaving rather abruptly to his Commanding Officer, and the matter is not yet settled. Until it is impossible for the General to give him an appointment it is a great pity, for he evidently would be very useful to you. Perhaps it may come right in time.

Yrs sincerely
Wm Napier¹

6. 1845/12. Scinde Association¹¹.

At a meeting held in the house of Captain Preedy on the 9th October, the following gentlemen were present: His Excellency Sir Charles Napier, &c. &c. in the chair; Col. Douglas, Capt. J. Napier, Capt. Browne, Dr. Gibbon, Lieut. Blagrove, John Macleod, Esq., Capt. Preedy, Capt. W. Napier, Capt. Byng, Lieut. Masters, Lieut. Major, and Burston; and a series of resolutions forming the bodies of the future rules of the Association were passed.

1st. That an association be formed at Kurrachee for the purpose of collecting information concerning the natural history, antiquities, statistics, &c. &c. of Scinde and the adjacent countries; and that it be denominated the Scinde Association.

2nd. That the Scinde Association shall consist of members, and that any individual, of whatever rank or service, desirous of joining the Association, intimate the same to the secretary.

¹¹ Captain William Craig Emilius Napier of the 25th was the aide-camp of General Sir Charles Napier. Confusingly, Captain J. M. Napier was the Chief of Staff, while Sir William Francis Patrick Napier would later write several books in defence of his brother Sir Charles.

¹² * *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, p. 52. See also *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 14 (Dec. 1845) pp. cxxx.

3rd. That his Excellency Sir Charles Napier be requested to become the patron of the Association.

4th. That Colonel Douglas be requested to become the president of the Association.

5th. That the five following gentlemen be requested to form the committee at Kurrachee: Captain Preedy, Captain Browne, Captain J. Napier, Lieut. Blagrave, and John Macleod, Esq. Ensign Burton, acting secretary and treasurer.

6th. That for the general purposes of the Scinde Association, purchasing books and coins, sending out proper persons to collect specimens of Natural History, &c. &c. a monthly subscription of five rupees be paid by each member in addition to a donation of twenty rupees on entrance.

7th. Captain Preedy having offered to place at the disposal of the Association one of the rooms in the new schoolroom built by him in the neighbourhood of the town, it is proposed that his offer be accepted as a temporary measure, but that means be taken for raising funds to be devoted solely to the purposes of the Association.

8th. That with respect to the library, the books to be purchased shall consist of works relating to Sindh and the adjacent countries, especially to history and antiquities, also that useful works, and books of reference, be provided for the use of the members.

9th. That every member be requested to favour the secretary with any information upon the proposed objects of the society. Any donations of books, specimens, &c. &c. will be most thankfully received.

10th. That the expense of transmitting all communications, if desired, by the society.

11th. That the secretary register all the papers and donations, together with the names of the donors, and enter in a book to be kept all miscellaneous and detached memoranda with which he may be favoured.

1846/02/13. T. C. Blagrove to Richard Burton.

12th. That quarterly general meetings be held, and that intermediate meetings also may be called for by the committee, or at the requisition of any five members.

13th. That the committee now elected be requested to frame and submit a series of regulations to the next meeting of the Association.

A general meeting of the Scinde Association will take place on the 8th November, 1845.

R. Burton, Acting Secretary and Treasurer, *Kurree Advertiser*.

7. 1846/02/13. T. Blagrove to Richard Burton¹³

To Lt. R. Burton 18th R

Rodewallah¹⁴
13th February 1846

My dear Burton

Many thanks for yours of the 9th which I received just this day before the action so have had no time to answer it. ¹⁵Wish you could only have seen it, it was a beautiful sight, and at first just like a glorious Grand Review. We got the order ¹⁶at on the 9th to be ready at 3 am o'clock to move against them and by sunrise we were all lined up behind the artillery who were scattered here and there along our whole front.

For the ¹⁷fit few hours we had only ¹⁸covered a little to get a nice berth under the banks of one of the [millaks] then we laid down and the Ball was a once begun by us absolutely in the right opening upon ¹⁹the batteries.

¹³National Library of Scotland MS 867 f. 11A. S. Thomas Colvin Blagrove (1818-1897) was a colleague from the Sindh Survey, and along with Burton a founder of the *Sindh Review* (London: Richard Bentley, 1876) Vol 2 p. 94. He eventually rose to Lieut. Colonel. The letter refers to events in the Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-7.

¹⁴Roode Wallah.

¹⁵_

this being the first intimation they had of our approach. They did not lose much time though in ~~ring~~ out and for two hours or more kept up a heavy cannon but fortunately did little execution among our guns as they could not get the proper range all their guns having been apparently laid against our entrenchment in the rear for their shot passed ~~over us~~. After a little time however they fell pretty near us. I was standing with several officers in the open when one passed within a couple of yards on left; it made me bob down fast as did the next two which pitched almost on the spot where ~~we stood~~

[] having put the ~~seiks~~ into confusion well out of the [Mollah] we jumped forward formed into line and got up to our guns and passed them there the whole company being [drawn] up into line we gave three cheers and rushed up to their ~~stre~~ trenchments which were cleared and passed. The inner entrenchments were carried in the same way and then the day was all our own. We had only to rush forward and drive the Seikhs into the river.

Corps took two guns and four standards and ~~at the end of~~ the river when for a minute or two there was slight confusion for we had come on so fast that we had got between a large body of flying enemy and the ford, but we faced both ways and cleared the field. The carnage in the river was ~~awful~~, hundreds falling every minute or else rushing the ford. Their letters state their loss at 20,000 but ~~every~~ say 10,000 which I don't think beyond the mark considering the numbers that fell in their determination to escape and the number killed and drowned in ~~crossing~~ the river. Our loss is said to be about 4,000 but I hardly think it can be so much as I saw but few of our men on ¹⁶ ~~the bank~~. We took altogether 68 guns, I am just going down to ~~see the~~ ¹⁷ ~~the~~ Ghy has crossed the river at [Villaree] about ~~15~~ ¹⁵ miles below this and I believe we are to cross the day after tomorrow where the ¹⁸ ~~Sikhs~~ said to have still 36 guns and 30,000 men but Taj Sing was wounded and most of their other chiefs killed so there is no one to lead them and they will therefore ~~make~~ ¹⁹ ~~not~~ very great opposition. I wish you could have been on the engagement it was the finest and most exciting sight I have ever seen, though at the same time there were one or two cases that made my blood curdle ~~the~~ low beings shot who had thrown down their

¹⁶The British suffered at least 2,500 casualties.

¹⁷Sikhs.

1846/02/13. T. C. Blagrove to Richard Burton.

arms. I saved one but was wrong in doing so for he afterwards escaped and no doubt picked up a musket and commenced fighting again.

Your friend Rivers White is now in my Corps. He exchanged ¹⁸for our 11th disgusted with it as they are always ¹⁹since he had joined us just time to be present at this last engagement ²⁰at the battle of Sabra he bids me send his salaams and tells me to say that he has at last earned and won a medal. I too had only joined a few days before so having ²¹by losing my kit for it enabled me to make long marches and when I got up ²²to the Corps]' all hands and got supplied with all necessities.

I hope we may meet at Lahore that you may see what a good ²³to the [Rgmt isl was always ²⁴of mine but now that I have seen them tried myself I like it still better and as for the young officers with the exception of one who could not wish to have a finer set. But I must now wish you goodbye and with best salaams to ²⁵Scott when next you write and to all your ²⁶camp, in haste yours sincerely

T. C. Blagrove

PS: Write soon please and give me any news you may have. Excuse my sending this ²⁷Bearing as the fellows at the Post Office here are most careless with pre paid ²⁸letters; they pocket the dubs and let the letters remain in their office some days before they send them away if they do. I have lost several letters that have since heard have been sent to me.

We did not get back to camp until nearly 8 o'clock ²⁹and were very tired but fortunately only had two officers wounded, Mackenzie badly and Rivers Whiteslightly ³⁰my Subaltern badly wounded and three or four of my men were badly knocked over. The little ³¹Gurkhas behaved splendidly as did our 1st Europea # @

¹⁸Losing.

¹⁹Captain Walter Scott, head of the Sindh Survey.

²⁰Postage to be paid by receiver.

²¹Ghurkas.

1846/07/. Joseph Netterville Burton to Captain Walter Scott.

8. 1846/07/ . Joseph Netterville Burton to Captain Walter Scott²³

7 Cumberland St Place²⁴ Sq. London

July 1846

My dear Sir (I shall feel obliged by your sending this letter to Richard's perusa)

I have received your very kind letter of the 19th April last for which I beg to return you my sincere thanks. It is much to be regretted that my beloved son has met with the disapprobation of the best General of the day and I also regret that he should have been removed from under your command, for I always valued your sound advice and disinterested friendship highly that I look upon his not joining your department as a real misfortune. However, Richard only acted up to the instructions repeatedly gave him namely never to tolerate situations which might possibly prevent his seeing service especially until he might have made a good name for himself in the field of battle". For my part I am perfectly convinced that he never intended to disobey Sir Charles' s orders so far the reverse that he imagined nothing could raise him so high in the estimation of the General as to pursue et saache²⁶ as distinguishing himself in actions which I am sure he intended to do if an opportunity offered.

From what I can learn my son tendered his resignation in due form to General Sympson²⁷ the then Commander of the Forces in Scinde which the General accepted, in consequence of which my son did not think that he was acting in disobedience of orders as Sir Charles had refused the Command of the Army to the G'l officer that permitted Richard to join the 1st Regt the army of Scinde seen service in the battles of the Sutley etc the officers returned with

²²Father of RFB. See Register.

²³National Library Of Scotland, MS 3867 f.121.

²⁴Pullman.

²⁵Postmarked Bombay 1846/08/25.

²⁶ †

²⁷Sir James Simpson (1792-1868) # V o described him as

Napier *History of General Sir Charles Napier's Administration of Scinde*: Chapman and Hall, 1851) p. 202.

medals some with promotions might they not say to my son "you have remained behind surveying & pocketing rupees while we were risking our lives, & gaining laurels in the field of battle".

How could he avoid these reputations but by ^p as the did? Tho' his life is dearer to me than that of any other being in existence I hope he will always risk it whenever his reputation as a soldier, or his ^{patrian} Englishman may be in question. I am very anxious that Richard may pass his examination in the Persian language in the course of this year as it may possibly bring him notice in Bombay) & think it would be advisable for him to visit persons of rank to whom he has letters of introduction. Sir Thos McMahon offered me a situation for Rich^d in the irregular Cavalry for which the latter ought to feel very grateful. I did not accept the offer lest ^d Rich^d should be removed from his studies. I have at length succeeded in buying your coat Richardsons for half the price I was asked for your books in the first instance. Mr. R's demand is £5.5s. Another person asked £10 for them. The Malabar has left the Docks with your books on board enclosed you will find your ^{the} balance in your favour paid to Mr Richardson. If the edition ^{is} not meet with your approbation I will thank you to send it to Richard as a present from me, & I shall pay the bookseller 5s. with orders to credit with the same, but previous to taking that step I hope you will make what use you like of the book in question. If you will be kind enough to name your friend in ^{Leghorn} make it a point to pay him any attention which I may easily do as I expect to pass the ensuing winter in Pisa or Florence. Sincerely do I hope you will, one day or other, give me an opportunity of shewing my gratitude for the essential service you have rendered to ^{By} ^{me} ^{to} remain my dear Sir

Yours very sincerely
Jos. Burton

	£	s	d
Price of the Raccota, 36 francsconi at 4/7	8	5	0
Expense incurred in sending them to Leghor		10	0
Thomsons acc't for rec'g & shipping them	2	11	7

²⁸does

²⁹Italy.

1846? Ensign Allen.

Belidor's work, entshippinginsurance & policy	5	16	0
		<u>17</u>	<u>2</u>
I paidMr.Richardson as balance	2	17	5
Total		<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>

Nota Bene

I received a twenty pound note which closes the above account. Addio. Jos:
Burton

(I expect to arrive in Tuscany about th one of 15th October next)³⁰

9. 1846? Ensign Allen³¹

On the way from Dharwar to Coimbatore, to which district I had been posted a
Collector and District Magistrate, my wife and I halted at Bangalore to stay with
Colonel Allen. That officer had been a brother³² with Sir Richard
Burton, the traveller, and he supplied several stories about him which were new
to me. Burton was not apparently popular with his messmates, towards whom
he adopted, according to my host, an insolent and overbearing ^{Allen} attitude.
ha

10. 1847. Walter Abraham³³

Sir,

Unlike your correspondent, Mr. Levick (of Suez), questioning Sir Richard's visit
to Medinah in 1853, I merely want to say that in Sir Richard the scientific work
has lost a bright star. In linguistics³⁴ there was not his equal in the
world. He could not only speak the languages, but act so well that his most
intimate friends were often deceived. I was often witness to this feat of his while
at Kurrachee in 1847, as I happened to be employed³⁵ by Dr. Stocks, botanist,
in Sind, as his botanical draughtsman. Sir Richard (then a lieutenant) and the
doctor occupied the same bungalow. I had necessarily to work in the hall, and

³⁰Barely legible note inscribed to the first leaf of the ^{latter} cross

³¹Alan Butterworth *The southlands of Siva: some reminiscences of life in Southern India*
(London: John Lane, 1923; reprinted 1990 by Asian Educational Services).

³²Ensign.

³³Letter to *the Times of India* 31 October 1891. Also reproduced in Isabel *Life*
Vol. 1, pp. 182.

consequently had the opportunity of seeing and admiring his ways. He was on special duty, which in his case meant to perfect himself for some political duty by mastering the languages of the country. When I knew him he was master of half a dozen languages, which he wrote and spoke so fluently that a stranger who did not see him and heard him speaking would fancy he heard a native. His domestic servants were Portuguese, with whom he spoke Portuguese and Goanese, an African, a Persian, and a Sindi or Belochee. These spoke their mother tongue to Sir Richard as he was engaged in his studies with moonshees, who relieved each other every two hours, from ten to four daily. The moonshees would read an hour and converse the next, and it was a treat to hear Sir Richard talk; one would scarcely be able to distinguish the English from Persian, Arabian, or a Scindian.

His habits at home were perfectly Persian or Arabic. His hair was dressed a la Persian long and shaved from the forehead to the top of the head; his eyes, by some means or other he employed, resembled Persian hair. He used the Turkish bath and wore a cowl; and when he went out for a ride he used a whip and goggles. His complexion was also thorough Persian, so that Nature evidently intended him for the work he afterwards so successfully performed, namely, visiting the shrine of the Prophet Mohammed. I know very few would have undertaken unless he was a complete master of himself.

I was a witness to his first essay in disguising himself as a poor Persian, and took in his friend Moonshee Ali Akbar (the father of Moonshee, solicitor of this City). The moonshee was seated one evening in an open space in front of his bungalow in the town of Kurrachee, with a lot of his friends enjoying the evening breeze, and chatting away as Persians are wont to do. Sir Richard, as a Persian traveller, approached them, and after the usual compliments, inquired for the residence, and, as a matter of course, gave a long rigmarole account of his travels and of people the moonshee knew, and thus excited his curiosity and got him into conversation; and when he thought he acted his part to perfection he bid him the time and left him, but did not go far when he called out to the moonshee in English if he did not know him. The moonshee was completely taken aback; he did not know where the voice (his friend Burton's) came from, till he was addressed again, and a recognition took place, to the great astonishment of the moonshee and his friends. Such a jovial companion Sir Richard was, that his bungalow was the resort of the best of the place,

1847/12. Pringle Report.

amongst whom I noticed Major (afterwards General) Walter Scott, Lieutenant (and now General) Alfred De Lisle, Lieutenant Edward Dansey of Mooltan notoriety, Dr. Stocks³⁴ and many others, but who, with the exception of General De Lisle are all gone to their home above, where Sir Richard has now followed. May their souls rest in peace!

Some time or other Lady Burton may write a memoir of Sir Richard's life, and a slight incident as the one I have related may be of use to her, and if you I do, and consider it worth inserting in a corner of your paper, I shall be very much obliged to you if you will do so.

Yours, etc.,
Walter Abraham.

October 31, 1891.

11. 1847/12. Pringle Report³⁵

Is any notice taken of offences against morality such as adultery drunkenness &c &c and what and by whom?³⁶

Captain Rathborne³⁷ Magistrate of Hyderabad.

No notice is taken of ordinary offences against morality unless the husband or relative whose honour is wounded or complainor of drunkenness unless the party is additionally disorderly. Public women formerly paid a tax to Government and were encouraged, they are now not molested as long as they abstain from disturbing their more respectable fellow people. But the

³⁴John Ellerton Stocks. See Register.

³⁵Republished in *Accounts and Papers* East India, Scinde Session January 12 August 1854.

³⁶In response to queries posed on 9 October 1847 by R. K. Pringle.

³⁷"The Karrachee Advertiser presently appeared in the modest shape of lithographed sheet on Government foolscap, and, through Sir William Napier, its most spicy articles had the honour of a reprint in London. Of these, the best were "the letters of Omega," by my late friend Rathborne, then Collector at Hyderabad, and they described the vices of the Sind Amirs in language the reverse of ambiguous. I did not keep copies, nor, unfortunately, did the clever and genial author. There is a letter from Rathborne to Burton in Vol 2, p. 245.

1848/02/19. Richard Burton to The Bombay Times.

purchase of gifts for purposes of prostitution has been put an end to
bands of Sodomites who formerly infested the country, some pay
from the state and others gain at the rate of some four years ago under
a futwah to the cazee publicly whipped, expelled the district, that is such as
fell into the hands of the authorities for the greater part of their
profession and resumed male clothing

12. 1848/02/19 Richard Burton to The Bombay Times.³⁸

EXAMINATION OF OFFICERS IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGES

Sir, We had determined to address you on a subject of some importance
the Examination of Officers in the native languages, I thought it better to
allow a few days to pass before we commenced our task; not that we had the
vanity to suppose that your humble suggestions would have had any effect upon
the minds of the Committee, still we were unwilling to undertake at such a time
the promulgation of a theory so unpopular as that we entertain

It will now be our object to prove that the present system is not only useless and
obsolete, but positively mischievous in its operation. In demonstrating this
great truth we shall proceed to consider the corollary, that the sooner it
is altered the better. Finally, we intend offering a few words on the subject
of remedying, most effectually, existing evils.

We will begin with the first ordeal through which the young linguist passes, viz
the Outstation Committee. This is understood to be an improvement upon the
G.O.C. of the 22d October 1831, which orders regimental commanding officers
to direct their interpreters to examine applicants for leave to the presidency in
the language supposed to have been learned. Unlike outstation committees in
Bengal and Madras, the circumstance of having passed examination before
one of those minor courts does not enable the individual to draw Moonshee
allowance. It is therefore merely a precautionary measure, to prevent a
want of preparation being evinced by a number of candidates. The abuse of
this part of the system is that it should always be duly understood that

³⁸Bombay Times Saturday Feb. 19, 1848 pp. 147 column 4 and 148 column 1. Written

passing before an outstation committee an officer should have a right to leave for examination at the presidency unless an emergency of service intervene. Whereas at present the contrary is occasionally the case, and such permission is looked upon as a favour, not a claim. Any commanding officer if determined to refuse a junior for any real or fancied offence can always prevent his obtaining leave, and keep up the obstacle for a year. Such things have happened, and will occur, especially when it is generally understood that a reference to superior authority almost invariably ends in a stern reprimand, and the unfortunate applicant setting forth his unmilitary and insubordinate spirit in the strongest light. In one case only do we recollect that a junior succeeded in his reference; but although he obtained leave, it was a casual not omitted. If Government intends the sum of rupees 180 (thirty rupees for a period of six months) really to cover the expenses of learning a language, Government ought either to assist officers in passing their examinations in that period, or remunerate them if prevented from so doing. The gist of our observations is, that no applicant should ever be refused leave to the presidency after passing an outstation committee, unless some sound reason for such refusal exist, and the said reason should always be communicated, if practicable, together with a hint as to the probable time when leave might be expected.

To illustrate what we have said, we will quote a case which fell under our personal inspection. An officer who had given his commanding officer some reason to be personally displeas'd with him, applied for an outstation committee preparatory to appearing for examination at the presidency. The application was forwarded, and, after as much delay as possible, the individual was ascertain'd that a leave of absence on duty was next to be obtained. The only answer offered to his application was, that he could not be allowed to proceed to Bombay. Thinking his case a hard one, he ventured to refer the point to the commanding officer of the station, for which he received from the latter authority a mild reply. Still feeling that justice was on his side, he had the audacity to proceed with the business, and applied once more to a higher authority. Being young in such matters, a phrase had been inserted in his reference which, though perfectly unintentional, gave such offence to the authority to which it was addressed, that the latter individual not only refused the leave of absence, but added to his refusal a most unmistakable expression of extreme

1848/02/19. Richard Burton to The Bombay Times.

displeasure. This linguist was compelled to digest as he best could; and, finding that everyone was against him, thought the wisest course was to keep silence. Sixteen months afterwards he availed himself of the first opportunity offered, and passed before the Bombay Committee. His loss was

Moonshee allowance for sixteen months Rs 960

at sixty rupees per mensem

Loss of boat allowance going and coming Rs 200

at 100 rupees each way

u 1160

He succeeded at last, it is true, but, to use a classical expression, another such triumph would fairly have ruined him. To show how imperfectly such matters are generally understood, may quote the fact that one of the officers to whom the reference was made, when informed privately by a friend of the referring party, that the case was one of great hardship, declared he could not understand it to be such, why cannot Mr. A. turn off his Moonshah and get a

Sensible remark admirable acuteness! Like unto the wise men who went forth to rake up the moonshine, our sapient senior forgot that there is such a thing as forgetfulness, and expected others to follow his example

Kurrachee, Feb. 6th, 1848. VIATOR.

Figure1. Bombay Times 1848/02/19.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BOMBAY TIMES.

**EXAMINATION OF OFFICERS IN THE
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SIR,—We had determined to address you upon a subject of some importance—the Examination of Officers in the Native Languages,—but thought it better to allow a few days to pass before we commenced our task; not that we had the vanity to suppose that our humble suggestions would have had any effect upon the minds of the Committee, still we were unwilling to undertake at such a time the promulgation of a theory so unpopular as that we entertain.

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1848/02/19. Richard B. The Bombay Times.

