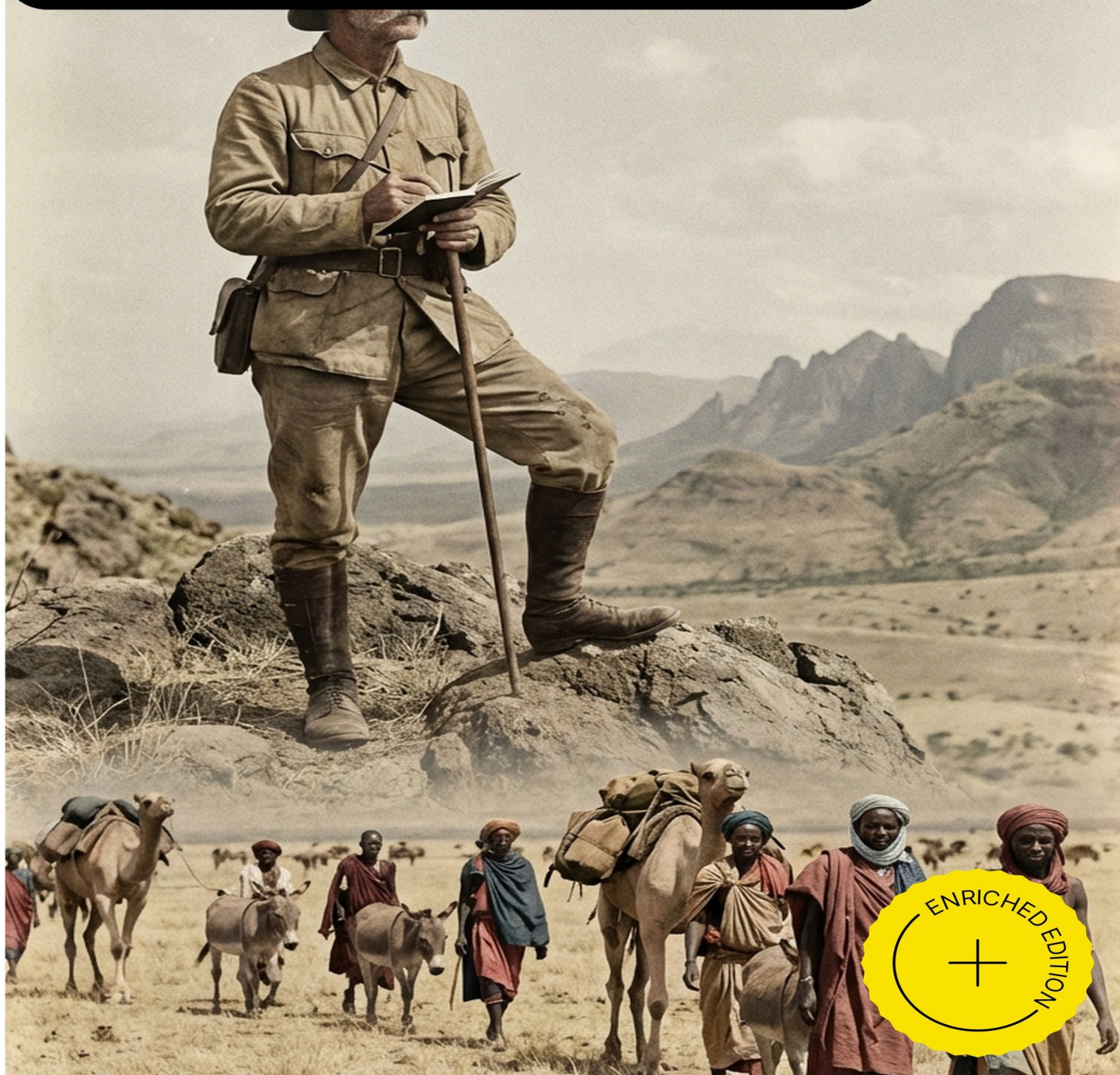
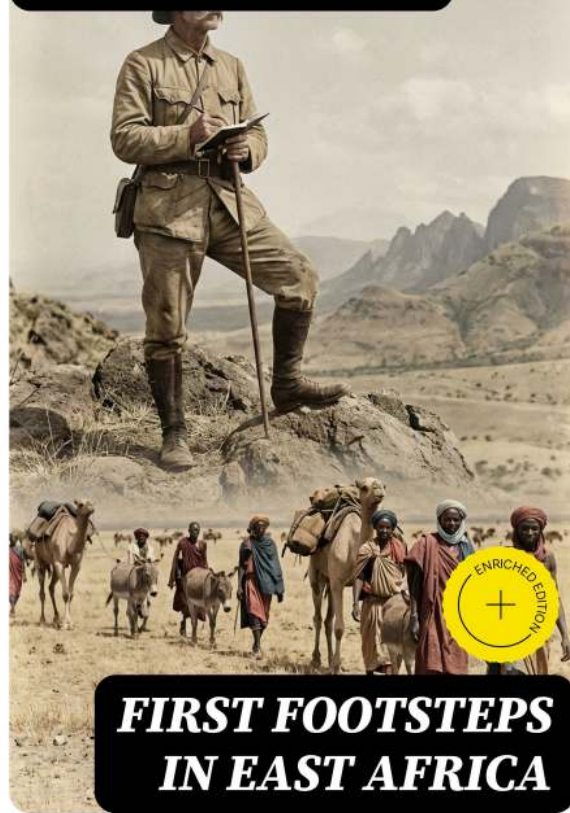


RICHARD FRANCIS SIR BURTON



FIRST FOOTSTEPS IN EAST AFRICA

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SIR BURTON**



**FIRST FOOTSTEPS
IN EAST AFRICA**

Richard Francis Sir Burton

First Footsteps in East Africa

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Nora Caldwell

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Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Historical Context](#)

[First Footsteps in East Africa](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Reflection](#)

[Memorable Quotes](#)

[Notes](#)

Introduction

[Table of Contents](#)

At the contested threshold where curiosity strains against prohibition, *First Footsteps in East Africa* traces a journey into the Horn of Africa that tests the porous lines between observation and intrusion, science and story, self-fashioning and survival, as its author measures an unknown-to-him world while that world, in turn, measures him through languages, markets, caravan law, and the guarded gates of a city reputedly closed to foreigners, revealing how exploration is never only a matter of miles crossed but of roles adopted, risks negotiated, and the moral ambiguities that shadow every step across cultural frontiers.

Written by Sir Richard Francis Burton, a British explorer and linguist, this volume belongs to the nineteenth-century tradition of travel narrative that blends ethnographic observation with geographical reportage. Set chiefly along the Somali coast and the caravan routes leading inland to Harar in the Horn of Africa, it records a mid-Victorian attempt to move from littoral entrepôts toward an inland polity known for restricting access. First published in the 1850s, the book sits within an era of intense European expeditions, yet it reads as a field notebook expanded into literature, attentive to terrain, caravan custom, trade, and the contingencies of passage.

The narrative follows Burton's preparations on the Gulf of Aden littoral, his negotiations to join caravans, and his careful calibration of conduct required by local authorities

and hosts, building toward an overland attempt to approach a city surrounded by reputation and rumor. Readers encounter a voice that is learned, occasionally sardonic, and meticulously descriptive, moving from compact scene to digressive note. The tone alternates between urgency and analytic calm, with attention to names, measures, and protocols that shape the journey. The result is a reading experience that combines suspense with documentary density without depending on contrived melodrama or retrospective triumph.

Among its central themes is the staged nature of encounter: identity becomes a tool to negotiate safety, and observation is entangled with performance. The book probes how commerce, religion, and clan allegiance regulate movement, and how rumor can operate as a kind of border. It foregrounds the friction of hospitality—generous yet conditional—and the ambivalence of mapping spaces that others already know. It also tracks the limits of the observer's knowledge, acknowledging gaps and relying on informants. In treating travel as a social contract rather than a solitary conquest, the work complicates the heroic myth that often shrouds exploration.

For contemporary readers, the book rewards and demands a dual posture: curiosity about the historical Horn of Africa and vigilance about the imperial frame that conditions the narrative. Its pages contain valuable observations about routes, markets, material culture, and local institutions, yet they also reflect the hierarchies and prejudices of their time. Engaging it today sharpens debates about representation, consent, and the ethics of looking,

while offering a textured primary source for historians of the region. It invites readers to examine how knowledge is gathered, whose voices are centered, and how power inflects even the most conscientious field description.

Stylistically, Burton pairs close-up sketches—of shoreline towns, campsites, council circles, and topography—with discursive notes that sift terms, proverbs, place-names, and reported histories. He catalogs measures and itineraries with a surveyor's care, but he also dwells on the choreography of conversation, where a word out of place can halt a caravan. The prose is dense yet lucid, shaped by a scholar's appetite for classification and a raconteur's feel for timing. Readers will notice how the author alternates between participant and analyst, sometimes registering personal peril, sometimes stepping back to annotate a practice, a title, or a story circulating along the route.

Approached with both openness and critique, *First Footsteps in East Africa* remains a vital document of contact, mobility, and method. It offers the exhilaration of a hazardous itinerary without relying on spectacle, and it preserves traces of daily life that resist abstraction. At the same time, it requires readers to interrogate the vantage point from which it speaks, to read against as well as with its claims. That dual engagement—learning from the record while assessing its frames—makes the book enduringly useful for scholars, travelers, and general readers seeking to understand how exploration narratives shape, and are shaped by, the worlds they enter.

Synopsis

[Table of Contents](#)

First Footsteps in East Africa; or, An Exploration of Harar is Richard Francis Burton's 1856 account of his attempt to reach the then little-known city of Harar and to survey the Somali interior from its Red Sea ports. Framing his journey as a contribution to geography and ethnography, Burton sets practical aims—tracing caravan routes, gauging commerce, and collecting linguistic and cultural data—against the hazards of travel in a region marked by clan politics and shifting alliances. The book combines a chronological narrative with extensive notes and appendices, offering a record of preparation, method, and purpose before the party leaves the security of Aden.

Initial chapters situate Aden as a British staging point and describe the commercial and political links tying Arabia to the Horn of Africa. Burton details the difficulty of assembling trustworthy escorts, provisioning a caravan, and negotiating safe passage with local authorities along the Gulf of Aden. Landfalls at traditional entrepôts on the Somali coast introduce the reader to bustling seasonal markets, the logic of port dues and gifts, and the delicate etiquette of hospitality. Throughout, he sketches coastlines, anchorages, and winds, showing how geography and monsoon rhythms dictate opportunity and delay before the expedition can strike inland toward the plateau.

Once overland, the narrative narrows to the daily cadence of caravan travel: rationing water, pacing camels,

and managing disputes within and between escorting groups. Burton records songs, proverbs, and customary law as he observes pastoral life, tracing how lineage, oath, and grazing rights shape movement and security. He notes the ecology of the thorn steppe and the tactics required to cross it, interspersing waypoints with sketches of camps, wells, and trading halts. His method blends participant observation with pragmatic self-presentation, adopting local dress and manners to lower suspicion while gathering vocabularies and itineraries that connect the coast to interior markets.

Harar, reputedly closed to most outsiders, stands as the journey's focal objective and interpretive test. Burton presents the city as a sovereign enclave commanding regional trade, with authority concentrated in its ruler, administrators, and guilds. Admission requires careful negotiation and strict observance of protocol, and once inside, he concentrates on urban rhythms: the organization of markets, religious life, taxation, and the codes that regulate strangers. He inventories crafts and commodities while analyzing the city's influence over surrounding districts. Even as he keeps diplomatic caution, he uses the visit to triangulate routes, prices, and political relationships that structure caravans and tribute.

Beyond narrative incident, the work foregrounds description and classification. Burton compiles notes on Somali and Harari speech, furnishing comparative vocabularies and remarks on pronunciation and grammar. He describes coffee cultivation and trade, the widespread use of a stimulant leaf in social exchange, and the circulation of ivory, hides, and slaves along regional routes.

Natural-historical sketches catalog animals and plants encountered on the march, while digressions analyze law, marriage, feud, and poetry. He attends to religious education and jurisprudence, highlighting how Islamic learning intersects with customary practice, and he relates these systems to the patterns of alliance that enable travel.

The return to the coast reveals how fragile negotiated safety can be. Friction at encampments escalates amid rivalries over tolls, honor, and protection, culminating in a sudden assault that exposes the expedition's vulnerability and the limits of foreign leverage. Burton recounts the confusion of retreat and the scramble to secure ships and care, using the crisis to reassess previous assumptions about patronage and risk. He measures gains and losses, weighs the ethics of reprisals, and evaluates what knowledge has been secured, insisting that even partial results—routes traced, observations logged—advance understanding of a region that maritime powers already engage.

Closing reflections connect personal experience to a wider program of inquiry. Burton positions his journey as an initial survey rather than a definitive conquest of facts, acknowledging gaps while emphasizing the utility of maps, vocabularies, and institutional sketches for future travelers and scholars. *First Footsteps in East Africa* thus occupies an early place in English-language studies of the Somali coast and Harar, combining adventure with a Victorian ethnographic lens whose prejudices and insights are both evident. Its enduring interest lies in the record it preserves

and in the questions it raises about access, representation,
and the entanglement of knowledge with power.

Historical Context

[Table of Contents](#)

First Footsteps in East Africa appeared in 1856, amid the high tide of Victorian exploration and imperial logistics in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. Richard Francis Burton, a linguist and officer in the Bombay Army of the East India Company, undertook the journey in 1854-55 after completing his 1853 pilgrimage to Mecca. With geographical inquiry celebrated by the Royal Geographical Society, the Horn of Africa presented an alluring blank on European maps. Burton set his sights on Harar, a walled Muslim city reputedly closed to foreigners. The work emerges from this milieu of sanctioned travel, scientific curiosity, and strategic interest converging on the African shore.

Aden, seized by Britain in 1839 and administered from Bombay, served as Burton's logistical springboard. Steam packets connected Suez to Aden and onward to India, making the port a vital coaling and intelligence hub. British anti-slavery patrols and convoying in the Gulf of Aden intersected with local treaties and fragile truces on the Somali coast. Berbera's annual fair drew merchants from Arabia, the interior, and the coast, channeling coffee, ivory, gums, and livestock. From this imperial outpost, Burton organized guides and passage, locating his enterprise within maritime power, commercial networks, and surveillance that defined Britain's regional presence and informed his observational priorities.

Harar, an inland emirate with a reputation for religious learning and commerce, had long restricted entry to non-Muslims. In 1854–55 it was ruled by the Amir Ahmad ibn Abu Bakr, and its trade in coffee and textiles moved through Zeila and Berbera toward Arabia. For European geographers it symbolized a closed archive of maps, measures, and markets. Burton sought to evaluate routes, resources, and authority there, entering in local disguise as a Muslim merchant. His account of court protocols, city walls, and religious life reinforces the era's fascination with secrecy and thresholds, while anchoring description in identifiable institutions and urban rhythms.

The surrounding lowlands and plateaus were dominated by Somali pastoral and trading clans such as the Isaaq (including Habr Awal and Habr Gerhajis) and Darod branches like the Warsangali, whose movements pivoted on wells, pastures, and caravan corridors. Customary law (xeer), lineage politics, and seasonal fairs structured alliances and disputes. Burton's text inventories lineages, tariffs, and itineraries, and appends notes on languages and proverbs. This mixture of ethnographic catalog and route-book reflects contemporary Victorian confidence in cataloguing peoples and spaces, while preserving details—weights, prices, distances—that anchored policy and commerce and shaped British readers' expectations about the Horn of Africa.

Control along the coast was layered and disputed. Zeila acknowledged Ottoman-Egyptian suzerainty through the Red Sea administration, yet practical authority lay with local officials and merchants. Berbera's leadership answered to

clan councils more than distant empires. European powers, including Britain, limited themselves to naval patrols, ad hoc negotiations, and occasional blockades rather than formal annexation in the 1850s. Burton's progress depended on permits, escorts, and payments negotiated at each frontier. His record of conflicting jurisdictions, tolls, and safe-conducts illuminates an era of informal empire, where influence flowed through ports and treaties, not colonies, shaping the procedural texture of his journey.

The mid-nineteenth century valorized travel as science. The Royal Geographical Society encouraged precise bearings, specimen lists, and climatic notes, and Burton had learned triangulation and surveying in India. *First Footsteps* accordingly logs latitudes, caravan stages, and trade volumes alongside sketches of shrines and markets. It situates Harar's coffee and regional gums within global demand and shipping circuits, linking inland production to Red Sea steam routes. This documentary method reflects Britain's accumulation of usable knowledge—geodesy, philology, and commerce—to support navigation, diplomacy, and war, while providing a dense evidentiary scaffold that helped later travelers plan safer and more purposeful itineraries.

In April 1855 violence at Berbera disrupted the expedition and British relations with coastal clans. Lieutenant John Hanning Speke was wounded, Lieutenant Stroyan was killed, and Burton himself was injured. The incident prompted a British naval blockade and diplomatic pressure for redress against the Habr Awal, sharpening official scrutiny of the port's annual fair. Without dwelling on

tactics, the book registers how risk, honor, and retaliation structured movement along the shore. That context colors Burton's emphases on security, guides, and consent, revealing how regional politics and imperial reprisals framed the evidence he chose to gather and the warnings he offered.

Published in London by Longman in 1856, *First Footsteps* quickly became a key English-language source on the Horn before high imperial partition. It fed maps, missionary and commercial briefings, and subsequent journeys, including Burton and Speke's search for the Nile's sources in 1857-59. Yet its pages also carry the era's Orientalist hierarchies and racial typologies, even as it corrects misconceptions with careful measurement and translation. The book's blend of scrutiny and bias both mirrors and critiques mid-Victorian ambitions: it exposes gaps in British knowledge while amassing data to close them, revealing how curiosity, strategy, and commerce structured what could be seen.

FIRST FOOTSTEPS IN EAST AFRICA

Main Table of Contents

[PREFACE.](#)

[LIST OF PLATES.](#)

[CHAPTER I.](#)

[CHAP. II.](#)

[CHAP. III.](#)

[CHAP. IV.](#)

[CHAP. V.](#)

[CHAP. VI.](#)

[CHAP. VII.](#)

[CHAP. VIII.](#)

[CHAP. IX.](#)

[CHAP. X.](#)

[POSTSCRIPT.](#)

[APPENDIX I.](#)

[METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS](#)

[APPENDIX II.](#)

[APPENDIX III](#)

[APPENDIX IV.](#)

[APPENDIX V.](#)

PREFACE.

[Table of Contents](#)

Averse to writing, as well as to reading, diffuse Prolegomena, the author finds himself compelled to relate, at some length, the circumstances which led to the subject of these pages.

In May 1849, the late Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Malcolm, formerly Superintendent of the Indian Navy, in conjunction with Mr. William John Hamilton, then President of the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain, solicited the permission of the Court of Directors of the Honorable East India Company[1] to ascertain the productive resources of the unknown Somali Country in East Africa. [1] The answer returned, was to the following effect:—

"If a fit and proper person volunteer to travel in the Somali Country, he goes as a private traveller, the Government giving no more protection to him than they would to an individual totally unconnected with the service. They will allow the officer who obtains permission to go, during his absence on the expedition to retain all the pay and allowances he may be enjoying when leave was granted: they will supply him with all the instruments required, afford him a passage going and returning, and pay the actual expenses of the journey."

The project lay dormant until March 1850, when Sir Charles Malcolm and Captain Smyth, President of the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain, waited upon the chairman of the Court of Directors of the Honorable East India Company. He informed them that if they would draw up a statement of what was required, and specify how it could be carried into effect, the document should be forwarded to the Governor-General of India, with a recommendation that, should no objection arise, either from expense or other causes, a fit person should be permitted to explore the Somali Country.

Sir Charles Malcolm then offered the charge of the expedition to Dr. Carter of Bombay, an officer favourably known to the Indian world by his services on board the "Palinurus[2]" brig whilst employed upon the maritime survey of Eastern Arabia. Dr. Carter at once acceded to the terms proposed by those from whom the project emanated; but his principal object being to compare the geology and botany of the Somali Country with the results of his Arabian travels, he volunteered to traverse only that part of Eastern Africa which lies north of a line drawn from Berberah to Ras Hafun,—in fact, the maritime mountains of the Somal. His health not permitting him to be left on shore, he required a cruizer to convey him from place to place, and to preserve his store of presents and provisions. By this means he hoped to land at the most interesting points and to penetrate here and there from sixty to eighty miles inland, across the region which he undertook to explore.

On the 17th of August, 1850, Sir Charles Malcolm wrote to Dr. Carter in these terms:—"I have communicated with

the President of the Royal Geographical Society and others: the feeling is, that though much valuable information could no doubt be gained by skirting the coast (as you propose) both in geology and botany, yet that it does not fulfil the primary and great object of the London Geographical Society, which was, and still is, to have the interior explored." The Vice-Admiral, however, proceeded to say that, under the circumstances of the case, Dr. Carter's plans were approved of, and asked him to confer immediately with Commodore Lushington; then Commander in Chief of the Indian Navy.

In May, 1851, Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Malcolm died: geographers and travellers lost in him an influential and an energetic friend. During the ten years of his superintendence over the Indian Navy that service rose, despite the incubus of profound peace, to the highest distinction. He freely permitted the officers under his command to undertake the task of geographical discovery, retaining their rank, pay, and batta[3], whilst the actual expenses of their journeys were defrayed by contingent bills. All papers and reports submitted to the local government were favourably received, and the successful traveller looked forward to distinction and advancement.

During the decade which elapsed between 1828 and 1838, "officers of the Indian Navy journeyed, as the phrase is, *with their lives in their hands*, through the wildest districts of the East. Of these we name the late Commander J. A. Young, Lieutenants Wellsted, Wyburd, Wood, and Christopher, retired Commander Ormsby, the present Capt. H. B. Lynch C.B., Commanders Felix Jones and W. C. Barker,

Lieutenants Cruttenden and Whitelock. Their researches extended from the banks of the Bosphorus to the shores of India. Of the vast, the immeasurable value of such services," to quote the words of the Quarterly Review (No. cxxix. Dec. 1839), "which able officers thus employed, are in the mean time rendering to science, to commerce, to their country, and to the whole civilized world, we need say nothing:—nothing we could say would be too much."

"In five years, the admirable maps of that coral-bound gulf—the Red Sea— were complete: the terrors of the navigation had given place to the confidence inspired by excellent surveys. In 1829 the *Thetis* of ten guns, under Commander Robert Moresby, convoyed the first coal ship up the Red Sea, of the coasts of which this skilful and enterprising seaman made a cursory survey, from which emanated the subsequent trigonometrical operations which form our present maps. Two ships were employed, the '*Benares*' and '*Palinurus*,' the former under Commander Elwon, the latter under Commander Moresby. It remained, however, for the latter officer to complete the work. Some idea may be formed of the perils these officers and men went through, when we state the '*Benares*' was forty-two times aground.

"Robert Moresby, the genius of the Red Sea, conducted also the survey of the Maldivé Islands and groups known as the Chagos Archipelago. He narrowly escaped being a victim to the deleterious climate of his station, and only left it when no longer capable of working. A host of young and ardent officers,—Christopher, Young, Powell, Campbell, Jones, Barker, and others,—ably seconded him: death was

busy amongst them for months and so paralyzed by disease were the living, that the anchors could scarcely be raised for a retreat to the coast of India. Renovated by a three months' stay, occasionally in port, where they were strengthened by additional numbers, the undaunted remnants from time to time returned to their task; and in 1837, gave to the world a knowledge of those singular groups which heretofore—though within 150 miles of our coasts—had been a mystery hidden within the dangers that environed them. The beautiful maps of the Red Sea, drafted by the late Commodore Carless [2], then a lieutenant, will ever remain permanent monuments of Indian Naval Science, and the daring of its officers and men. Those of the Maldivé and Chagos groups, executed by Commander then Acting Lieutenant Felix Jones, were, we hear, of such a high order, that they were deemed worthy of special inspection by the Queen."

"While these enlightening operations were in progress, there were others of this profession, no less distinguished, employed on similar discoveries. The coast of Mekran westward from Scinde, was little known, but it soon found a place in the hydrographical offices of India, under Captain, then Lieutenant, Stafford Haines, and his staff, who were engaged on it. The journey to the Oxus, made by Lieut. Wood, Sir. A. Burnes's companion in his Lahore and Afghan missions, is a page of history which may not be opened to us again in our own times; while in Lieut. Carless's drafts of the channels of the Indus, we trace those designs, that the sword of Sir Charles Napier only was destined to reveal."

"The ten years prior to that of 1839 were those of fitful repose, such as generally precedes some great outbreak. The repose afforded ample leisure for research, and the shores of the island of Socotra, with the south coast of Arabia, were carefully delineated. Besides the excellent maps of these regions, we are indebted to the survey for that unique work on Oman, by the late Lieut. Wellsted of this service, and for valuable notices from the pen of Lieut. Cruttenden. [3]

"Besides the works we have enumerated, there were others of the same nature, but on a smaller scale, in operation at the same period around our own coasts. The Gulf of Cambay, and the dangerous sands known as the Molucca Banks, were explored and faithfully mapped by Captain Richard Ethersey, assisted by Lieutenant (now Commander) Fell. Bombay Harbour was delineated again on a grand scale by Capt. R. Cogan, assisted by Lieut. Peters, now both dead; and the ink of the Maldive charts had scarcely dried, when the labours of those employed were demanded of the Indian Government by Her Majesty's authorities at Ceylon, to undertake trigonometrical surveys of that Island, and the dangerous and shallow gulfs on either side of the neck of sand connecting it with India. They were the present Captains F. F. Powell, and Richard Ethersey, in the Schooner 'Royal Tiger' and 'Shannon,' assisted by Lieut. (now Commander) Felix Jones, and the late Lieut. Wilmot Christopher, who fell in action before Mooltan. The first of these officers had charge of one of the tenders under Lieut. Powell, and the latter another under Lieut. Ethersey. The maps of the Pamban Pass and the Straits of Manaar were by

the hand of Lieut. Felix Jones, who was the draftsman also on this survey: they speak for themselves." [4]

In 1838 Sir Charles Malcolm was succeeded by Sir Robert Oliver, an "old officer of the old school"—a strict disciplinarian, a faithful and honest servant of Government, but a violent, limited, and prejudiced man. He wanted "sailors," individuals conversant with ropes and rigging, and steeped in knowledge of shot and shakings, he loved the "rule of thumb," he hated "literary razors," and he viewed science with the profoundest contempt. About twenty surveys were ordered to be discontinued as an inauguratory measure, causing the loss of many thousand pounds, independent of such contingencies as the "Memnon." [5] Batta was withheld from the few officers who obtained leave, and the life of weary labour on board ship was systematically made monotonous and uncomfortable:—in local phrase it was described as "many stripes and no stars." Few measures were omitted to heighten the shock of contrast. No notice was taken of papers forwarded to Government, and the man who attempted to distinguish himself by higher views than quarter-deck duties, found himself marked out for the angry Commodore's red-hot displeasure. No place was allowed for charts and plans: valuable original surveys, of which no duplicates existed, lay tossed amongst the brick and mortar with which the Marine Office was being rebuilt. No instruments were provided for ships, even a barometer was not supplied in one case, although duly indented for during five years. Whilst Sir Charles Malcolm ruled the Bombay dockyards, the British name rose high in the Indian, African, and Arabian seas.

Each vessel had its presents— guns, pistols, and powder, Abbas, crimson cloth and shawls, watches, telescopes, and similar articles—with a suitable stock of which every officer visiting the interior on leave was supplied. An order from Sir Robert Oliver withdrew presents as well as instruments: with them disappeared the just idea of our faith and greatness as a nation entertained by the maritime races, who formerly looked forward to the arrival of our cruisers. Thus the Indian navy was crushed by neglect and routine into a mere transport service, remarkable for little beyond constant quarrels between sea-lieutenants and land-lieutenants, sailor-officers and soldier-officers, their "passengers." And thus resulted that dearth of enterprise—alluded to *ex cathedra* by a late President of the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain—which now characterises Western India erst so celebrated for ardour in adventure.

To return to the subject of East African discovery. Commodore Lushington and Dr. Carter met in order to concert some measures for forwarding the plans of a Somali Expedition. It was resolved to associate three persons, Drs. Carter and Stocks, and an officer of the Indian navy: a vessel was also warned for service on the coast of Africa. This took place in the beginning of 1851: presently Commodore Lushington resigned his command, and the project fell to the ground.

The author of these pages, after his return from El Hajaz to Bombay, conceived the idea of reviving the Somali Expedition: he proposed to start in the spring of 1854, and accompanied by two officers, to penetrate *via* Harar and Gananah to Zanzibar. His plans were favourably received by

the Right Hon. Lord Elphinstone, the enlightened governor of the colony, and by the local authorities, amongst whom the name of James Grant Lumsden, then Member of Council, will ever suggest the liveliest feelings of gratitude and affection. But it being judged necessary to refer once more for permission to the Court of Directors, an official letter bearing date the 28th April 1854 was forwarded from Bombay with a warm recommendation. Lieut. Herne of the 1st Bombay European Regiment of Fusileers, an officer skilful in surveying, photography, and mechanics, together with the writer, obtained leave, pending the reference, and a free passage to Aden in Arabia. On the 23rd August a favourable reply was despatched by the Court of Directors.

Meanwhile the most painful of events had modified the original plan. The third member of the Expedition, Assistant Surgeon J. Ellerton Stocks, whose brilliant attainments as a botanist, whose long and enterprising journeys, and whose eminently practical bent of mind had twice recommended him for the honors and trials of African exploration, died suddenly in the prime of life. Deeply did his friends lament him for many reasons: a universal favourite, he left in the social circle a void never to be filled up, and they mourned the more that Fate had not granted him the time, as it had given him the will and the power, to trace a deeper and more enduring mark upon the iron tablets of Fame.

No longer hoping to carry out his first project, the writer determined to make the geography and commerce of the Somali country his principal objects. He therefore applied to the Bombay Government for the assistance of Lieut. William Stroyan, I. N., an officer distinguished by his surveys on the

stimulant; it contains psychoactive alkaloids and has long cultural use in the region.

38 Faras is the Arabic word for 'horse'; the passage notes that Somalis commonly use this Arabic term for the animal.

39 Fida (here rendered as 'Expiatory offering') refers to an expiatory or ransom sacrifice—commonly a sheep or other animal—offered to avert misfortune or as thanks in local Islamic and customary practice.

40 Refers to an entrance constructed from holcus stalks; 'holcus' is an older name for certain millet/sorghum plants whose dried stalks were commonly used for fencing, thatch, and lightweight gates in the Horn of Africa.

41 The ruler of Harar whom Burton met and calls the Amir; he styled himself 'Sultan' and was the reigning local prince at the time of the author's mid-19th-century visit.

42 An Arabic term meaning 'state' or 'government'; in the passage Burton uses 'Daulah' to refer to the governor or governing authority (here the political superior in Aden).

43 A local dish described by Burton as 'holcus cakes soaked in sour milk'; holcus here denotes a millet/sorghum-based flatbread common in the region.

44 A title-and-name combination in the text: 'Gerad' (or 'Gerad') is a regional title for a chief or governor, and Gerad Mohammed is the Wazir/minister of Harar whom Burton meets and who handles administrative affairs.

45 A historical province in which Harar lay; Hadiyah appears in medieval sources and in the passage as the region whose ancient capital is Harar (the term denotes a territorial/political unit in the Ethiopian lowlands).

46 Al-Maqrizi (often anglicized 'Makrizi') was a medieval Egyptian historian (c. 1364–1442) whose chronicles include information about Red Sea, Arabian, and Horn of Africa affairs and who is cited here for mentioning Hadiyah.

47 A late 15th-century Muslim leader of the coastal/lowland polities (referred to in the text) who launched raids into Christian Abyssinia; Burton summarizes contemporary accounts of his sustained campaigns against Abyssinian targets.

48 The name used in the narrative for the 16th-century Adal war-leader commonly known as Ahmad Gagn (Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi); he led major military campaigns against Abyssinia and died in the mid-16th century (1540 is given in the text).

49 An Arabic title meaning 'Conquest of Abyssinia,' referring to a historical chronicle of the Muslim campaigns (jihad) against Abyssinia; Burton notes the work exists but is rare and not readily accessible in Harar.

50 A church in Gondar, Ethiopia, dedicated to the Virgin Mary; the name (rendered here as “Debra Berhan”) is commonly translated as “Hill of Glory” or “Hill of Light” and is associated with the Ethiopian Orthodox tradition.

51 Rendered in the text as a title or sobriquet applied to a prince, literally glossed here as “feared amongst the lions,” i.e. an epithet rather than a personal name.

52 An Ottoman commander/governor associated with Ottoman expansion in the Red Sea region; the text refers to Yemeni submission to his authority around A.D. 1538 during Ottoman campaigns in Arabia.

53 The Portuguese Jesuit missionary Jerónimo (or Jerome) Lobo (active in the 17th century), known for travel accounts of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa that influenced later European writers.

54 A reference to a Portuguese figure identified in travel literature (likely Dom Cristóvão/Cristóvão da Gama), a 16th-century Portuguese military leader who was active and killed in Ethiopia; the narrator is discussing accounts of his burial and relics.

55 A historical Islamic term (also spelled jizya) for a tax or tribute levied on non-Muslim subjects in some Muslim polities; here the word is used to denote a tribute or gift given to the traveller by the Amir.

56 A historic port on the Gulf of Aden (now commonly rendered Berbera) that served in the 19th century as a major emporium for trade between Somaliland, Arabia, and India; its precise modern administrative status varies with contemporary political descriptions.

57 A 19th-century British usage for Indian (often Gujarati) merchant communities who traded across the Indian Ocean from ports such as Porebunder, Mandavie (Mandvi), and Bombay.

58 Large Arabian dhows (also called baghlah or bagala) used in traditional Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf trade, noted for carrying cargoes between places like Bahrein, Basra (Bussorah), and the Gulf ports.

59 A local Somali leader referred to with the honorific 'Hajj' (indicating a pilgrim to Mecca) who, according to Burton, erected towers and played a prominent role in mid-19th-century affairs around Berberah.

60 A historical reference to a Persian monarch (commonly identified with Khosrow I, called Anushirwan) of the Sassanian dynasty active in the 6th century; Burton links troops of Anushirwan with events in Yemen in the early medieval period (chronologies in sources may vary).

61 Small circular coastal fortifications of the early 19th century, built to mount artillery and defend harbours; Burton refers to four such towers erected at Berberah and later dismantled.

62 A Somali name for the seasonal monsoon (the text calls it 'the Gugi or Somali monsoon'), marking the onset of the rainy/wind season that influences local migration and maritime activity.

63 A local minor chief or headman (also seen historically as 'Akil') who could represent or negotiate for a clan or sub-clan on matters such as passage, tribute, or disputes.

64 A term (from Italian fiumara) for broad shallow dry riverbeds or seasonal torrent channels that fill and carry floodwaters in the rainy season; used here to describe the monsoon runoff courses on the Somali plain.

65 A term used in the narrative for an occupationally marginalized group among Somalis (often spelled Midgan or Madhiban), historically treated as servile or outcaste in traditional social hierarchies; usage in sources can be pejorative and social meanings have changed over time.

66 An English 19th-century rendering of a native coastal trading craft (a dhow-type vessel, often related to the Arabic 'baghlah' or similar cargo boats) used in Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade; spelling and exact vessel type vary in contemporary accounts.