

The Travels of Francis Galton

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the role played by travel in the early social and psychological development of the English scientist Francis Galton. It tells the story of those travels, relating the narrative of the journey through Galton's own writings and the writings of those, like Swedish explorer Charles John Andersson who, on occasion, travelled with him. It examines the extent to which travel was implicated in the developmental process through which Galton, and many other young men, passed in order to achieve adult status in middle-class Victorian society. Becoming a man required demonstration of mental and physical endurance and the successful undertaking of tasks the accomplishment of which was recognised and lauded by other men. Not all made the transition into adult manhood with ease. In Galton's case a sociable nature and heightened curiosity about the world encouraged the process. A strong family bond, useful family connections in business and science, and wealth—and the freedom of choice and action it bestowed—played their part. Beginning his travels under the supervision of his father Samuel Tertius, Francis Galton was guided in this process toward adult independence. Travel became, purposely, a graduated, purposeful, leaving of home. His place as the youngest child among protective older sisters and very much older brothers made the challenge to find his own way in life more urgent. With the death of his father the task began in earnest.

The travels cover the period 1844 to 1852 when Galton, aged 22 to 30, also made his first contribution to scientific observation, experiment, and writing. There are three phases of exploration, and concomitant personal growth, each with their own characteristics and narrative quality: 'roughing it' with university friends in Egypt the Sudan and Syria; learning the skills of a 'country gentleman,' by hunting and shooting in Scotland; and finally, making the journey that made his fame: into largely unexplored southern Africa [Namibia]; in the wake of David Livingstone and the sportsmen and adventurers whose written and illustrated accounts of Africa so thrilled the Victorian reading public.

The Royal Geographic Society had since 1830 set the agenda and determined the nature and scope of scientific travel, and Galton, through his family connections, was able, both, to become a member and persuade the RGS that he was the right person to lead an expedition into Africa. His self-funded, self-provisioned, two-year journey from Walfisch Bay to the Portuguese Territories [Angola] and back, marked the successful consolidation of skills mastered during previous travels: taking advice from those able to help him achieve his goal; handling animals and organising men; negotiating with indigenous peoples with the power to thwart or guide him safely into alien territory; finding water in an arid land; making camp under a searing sun; taking readings of latitude and longitude and recording and measuring what he observed, often by ingenious means. At the end of the journey the real skill he had gained was that of self-mastery and manly independent action in the world.

This is to certify that the thesis comprises only my original work except where indicated in the preface; due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used; the thesis is 20,000—22,000 words in length, inclusive of footnotes, but exclusive of tables, maps, appendices and bibliography.

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A NOTE ON SPELLING

The variations in spelling of terms, names and names of places, as used by the original authors and artists has been retained throughout.

INTRODUCTION

By the time he wrote his autobiography *Memories of My Life* (1908) Francis Galton was, by his own reckoning, the author of 182 published writings. The first, *Telotype, a Printing Electric Telegraph* appeared in 1850 when he was twenty-eight; the last, *Address on Eugenics*, in 1908, when he was eighty-six. Three more years of life added another sixteen contributions, the final being a letter to the *Times* titled *The Eugenics Laboratory and the Eugenics Education Society* which appeared on 2 November 1910.

American Samuel Morse (1791–1872) had invented his famous code system in 1837 and fellow-countryman Royal Earl House (1814–95) followed with the first printing electric telegraph in 1846. Galton's own attempt to design such a machine in 1849 was in response to the introduction, into England, of this innovative new technology of human communication. But, where the nature of electricity would lead to no further exploration, Galton would bring to the study of human individual difference a level of focussed commitment that would alter the parameter for its understanding.

This commitment was first explored in print by Karl Pearson (1857–1936) his first biographer. Pearson's *Life, Letters and Labours of Francis Galton* (1914–1930) was and is a memorial as much as a life-history; the gift of a devoted acolyte to his teacher. Pearson, mathematician and eugenicist, infused this massive work with an approach to his subject which served as a template for all Galton biographies that followed. Complete with detailed genealogical appendices, it is a paean to the hereditarian point of view, making his subject an exemplar of that standpoint. This model portrays Galton as a 'well-born' slightly eccentric Victorian polymath who made an important contribution to the development and application of the statistical sciences in name of race-improvement; and whose development as a mature man and scientist was toward this end. Galton's own biography feeds this approach, but, has also tended to limit discussion of his life to a

narrow focus.¹ While the sheer breadth of his involvements stands in the way of a definitive statement; begging the question (true for any biography): Who is Francis Galton? In order Derek W. Forrest in *Life and Work of a Victorian Genius* (1974), Nicholas W. Gillham in *A Life of Sir Francis Galton: From African Explorer to the Birth of Eugenics* (2001), Michael G. Bulmer in *Francis Galton: Pioneer of Heredity and Biometry* (2003) and Martin Brookes in *Extreme Measures: The Dark Visions and Bright Ideas of Francis Galton* (2004), in trying to answer this question have provided full biographies exploring Galton's life and 'professional' development. Others, like Daniel Kelves in *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (1985) and Ruth Schwartz Cowan in *Sir Francis Galton and the Study of Heredity in the Nineteenth Century* (1985) have presented a biographical picture as part of a larger discussion. Galton's significant contribution to statistics has been singled out in Donald A. MacKenzie's *Statistics in Britain, 1865–1930* (1981) and more recently in Shoutir Kishore Chatterjee's *Statistical Thought: A Perspective and History* (2003); and Galton always finds his place in general psychology texts such as Raymond E. Fancher's *Pioneers of Psychology* (1996).

Nathaniel Comfort, has explored the issue of Galton's 'reputation' evinced through the most recent biographies. While granting that Galton was 'an original thinker with real human virtues and flaws,' he notes that his reputation tends to 'shift kaleidoscopically, reflecting the predispositions, inclinations, and prejudices of his biographers.' He argues that while Darwin's biographers all agree on some basic facts of his life and work, 'Galton has enjoyed no such consistency.' And, 'depending on whom one reads, he can appear a genius or a fool, a confident optimist or a bumbling neurotic, a towering scientific giant or a notorious intellectual dwarf.'² Portraits are, thus, not always flattering since the vexed issue of eugenics, and the various biographers' attitude to it, has tended to minimise the very real contributions and obscure other aspects of the life-story that

¹ Clinton Machann, "Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life* (1908)," in *The Genre of Autobiography in Victorian Literature* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 145–57.

² Nathaniel Comfort, 'Zelig: Francis Galton's Reputation in Biography.' *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 80 (2006), 348.

warrant telling. The youthful and African travel warrant such attention. The purpose in this thesis is to look more closely at this aspect of Galton's life-story.

While the practical facts are described in Galton's *Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa* (1853) and *Memories* (1908); in J. P. R. Wallis's *Fortune My Foe* (1936) the biography of Charles John Andersson, and in Andersson's *Lake Ngami* (1857); and Gillham, for instance, gives detailed facts in his *Life*, most abstain from making a deeper analysis of this travel as a metaphor for personal growth. While some have, specifically, considered his psychological make-up or social milieu as an influence on his work, few consider Galton's travels as the adventure of maturation, a 'boys own' story where the 'otherness' of the destinations mirrors the challenge inherent in that undertaking.³ This thesis aims to redress the balance and focus on Galton's travels as part of his development; from childhood to age thirty. Before fame. Before eugenics. To observe his efforts to establish his identity as an adult through travel in the *context* of his Victorian upbringing. To explore his relationships with significant-others, particularly the influence of his father Samuel Tertius Galton, who first encouraged his son in a practical way to mix his interest in science with a growing awareness of the pleasure of travel.

John Tosh has examined the nature of masculine development in the nineteenth-century and Galton's journey(s) may be understood in light of *his* masculine development; while Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's sociological analysis of the family-constellation in the English middle-class during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century—in which, notably, the Galton family is singled out—serves to inform the presentation of the story. In this thesis an approach is taken that allows exploration of both personal-psychological and broader socio-cultural aspects of the narrative. It will be shown that

³ Raymond E. Fancher, 'Francis Galton's Ethnography and its Role in His Psychology.' *British Journal for the History of Science*, 16, 1 (1983): 67–79; Johannes Fabian, 'Hindsight: Thoughts on Anthropology Upon Reading Francis Galton's *Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa*.' *Critique of Anthropology*, 7 (1987): 37–49.

Galton's attitude to and experience of travel, indeed his belief that travel was a means to establish himself in the world of men, was a view he shared with others.⁴

Accepting Frank E. Manuel's assertion that 'psychological jargon is ... too ugly for narrative history,' and that 'one can adopt the concepts without the nomenclature,' this thesis adopts a 'life-story' approach to tell the story of Francis Galton's adventure. Specifically it makes use of Langdon Elsbree's concept of literary 'generic plot' to guide the story. One such generic plot is manifested in the idea of 'the journey' through life, in all its facets and settings: personal, social and historical; and Galton's *journey* is understood as such a life-story in the making.⁵ With this perspective in mind this thesis sets out to add to the biographical literature on Francis Galton and takes a narrative approach.

As Chapter 1 reveals, Francis Galton could never be anything but conscious of his ancestry, social connections, and place in a family as well-endowed materially, creatively and intellectually as were the Galtons, Wedgwoods and Darwins. The youngest son of devoted parents ever-anxious to give him the best education, he was a mediocre Cambridge undergraduate and medical-student with a love of travel—and numbers. Inherited wealth enabled travel in the Middle East and Africa, the latter with the support of the Royal Geographic Society. Exploration in Africa, in company with C. J. Andersson, led to fame and a scientific career. Marriage to Louisa Butler established him in Victorian society. His first scientific contribution is in meteorology. In the wake of Darwin's work on adaptation he turns to the study of individual difference and heredity leading to his controversial proposition of eugenics. He broke new ground in statistics.

⁴ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); See also, Michael Roper and John Tosh eds. *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991); John Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?: Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain.' *History Workshop Journal*, 38 (1994): 179–202; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

⁵ Frank E. Manuel, 'The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History.' *Daedalus*, 100, 1 (1971): 187–213; Langdon Elsbree, *The Rituals of Life: Patterns in Narratives* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1982).

His books introduced important themes in heredity, statistics and psychology. Honours and medals follow and a knighthood is conferred.

These achievements were made possible by Galton's inheritance and Chapter 2 begins exploring the misunderstood period between 1844 and 1849 when he leaves his mother's house in order to 'sow his wild oats,' a developmental task which, John Tosh argues, is a necessary step in becoming an adult man in middle-class Victorian society. Galton achieves this through travelling in Egypt where he meets French engineer d'Arnaud Bey, and considers him a role model, one suggesting that a purposeful life could be made in both science and exploration.

Coming home, in 1846, Galton continues his masculine education and Chapter 3 follows him as he acquires the skills of a country gentleman alongside other wealthy young men including the son of the legendary sportsman 'Mad' Jack Mytton whose story is told. In 1848, he heads to Scotland where Victoria and Albert have also discovered the Highlands. By 1849, tired of aimless travel, he consults a phrenologist to gauge his character and prospects: an active, rather than intellectual, life awaits. Soon a bigger challenge appears: Africa. Introduction to an organization dedicated to geography and exploration help him toward his goal.

Thus Chapter 4 examines the origins of the Royal Geographic Society, seen as a development of the interests of scientists like Joseph Banks of the African Association and travellers like Arthur de Capel Broke of the Travellers Club. The Society forms, in 1830, from the merger of their respective groups; Galton benefits both from its history of exploration and his family connections. David Livingstone is making news and there is increasing demand for books on foreign travel. Galton is in a box seat as he offers himself as the man to lead an expedition into unexplored parts of southern Africa.

He does not travel alone and in Chapter 5 Galton invites Swedish explorer Charles John Andersson to accompany him. In Cape Town he takes advice from Sir Harry Smith and agrees to act for British interests. He assembles a team of local men, skilled in

handling animals and wagons, and uses a network of German missions to travel beyond Cape Colony. He goes on a lion hunt. He hears of the wars between the Namaqua and Damara and of Jonker Afrikaner whose permission he needs to travel.

He makes an attempt at human physical measurement, demonstrating the ingenuity he would later bring to his scientific work. Finally Chapter 6 follows Galton as he uses his status as representative of British interests to achieve a safe passage into Ovamboland.

This thesis explores Galton's personal development between the years 1844 and 1852. A time when 'the road was not clear before him,' and he did not 'know his own soul.'⁶ In setting out into the world a transformation would take place, one which would change him from a 'boy of unformed character ... to a purposeful man seeking to extend human knowledge.'⁷ Travel, particularly travel in foreign lands, is a way for Galton to achieve this goal. While there were successful pathfinders, like Livingstone, to provide role models, mounting an expedition remained a psychological, financial and logistical challenge. The successful completion of such an expedition by a young man keen to prove himself was, potentially, a means through which he could establish himself in adult society. Through the encouragement of mentors connected with the RGS, Francis Galton set out on his life-defining journey. A journey which, as the following pages show, began in childhood and privileged certain actions over others: leaving the comfort of home; engaging in pursuits requiring mental and physical endurance, and doing so in the company of men. Becoming a man, was not a natural process but a state and identification which had to be earned.⁸

⁶ Karl Pearson, *The Life, Letters and Labours of Francis Galton*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914–1930), 1, 198.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 18.

1 Sir Francis Galton: A biographical sketch

On January 19, 1911 the *Times* of London announced the death in his 89th year of Sir Francis Galton FRS at Grayshott House, Haslemere in Surrey.¹

When he died three years before the outbreak of the first Great War of the twentieth century Francis Galton could be reckoned as one of the great scientific personalities of the previous nineteenth century. His death marked the passing of a man whose own creative energy, eccentricities and biases were, perhaps, the qualities most characteristic of the age into which he was born. Explorer, meteorologist, mathematician, psychologist and controversially the promulgator of the so-called science of eugenics, he was truly a man with a ‘universal scientific curiosity,’ and a striking example of Victorian scientific exuberance and imagination.²

Francis Galton was born on 16 February 1822 at the Larches near Sparkbrook Birmingham, a hamlet with which his father Samuel Tertius Galton (1783–1844), his grandfather Samuel John Galton (1753–1832) and his great-grandfather Samuel Galton (1720–99) were all closely associated. They had lived beyond the town, ‘in houses then amidst green fields,’ but which by the beginning of the twentieth-century had succumbed to urban sprawl.³ Quakers since the early eighteenth-century they were well-connected in business and science. Samuel John Galton was a wealthy industrialist who had made his fortune in banking and, unusually for a Quaker, the manufacture of armaments.⁴ He loved animals and wrote a book on the history of birds enlivened with one hundred copperplate

¹ Obituary notice, the *Times*, January 19, 1911, 11.

² Milo Keynes, *Sir Francis Galton, FRS: The Legacy of His Ideas* (London: The Galton Institute, 1993), ix; Pearson, *Life*, 1: 60.

³ Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1909), 2.

⁴ Derek William Forrest, *Francis Galton: The Life and Work of a Victorian Genius* (London: Paul Eck, 1974), 1; See also Barbara M. D. Smith, ‘The Galtons of Birmingham: Quaker Gun Merchants and Bankers, 1702–1831.’ *Business History* 9, 2, (1967): 132–150. ‘There are in the Town several other manufacturers of guns ... one ... is Mr Samuel Galton,’ in *A Brief History of Birmingham Intended as a Guide to the Inhabitant & Stranger* (England? 1805), 54.

drawings.⁵ After a troubled relationship with the Society of Friends, who called him to account over his business dealings, he was disowned by them in 1795. He mounted a spirited defence and was eventually reconciled with the Friends upon his retirement from business in 1804.⁶

Samuel John had married Lucy Barclay (1757–1817) in 1777 and their union produced ten children. Their eldest boy died in infancy and their second son was Samuel Tertius Galton (1783–1844) Francis Galton’s father. Described by his son as ‘one of the most honourable and kindly of men, and eminently statistical by nature’ Samuel possessed abundant humour, reading *Tom Jones* at least once a year, but he was also a ‘careful man of business.’⁷ The pedagogue Dr Samuel Parr (1747–1825) described him as ‘semi-demi-quaker [*sic*] in religion, semi-beau in dress, a lover of wonders and of rarities in science, and by profession a Whig.’⁸ In 1802 Samuel Galton joined the Established Church when he married Frances Ann Violetta Darwin (1783–1874) the daughter of the philosopher/poet Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802).⁹

⁵ Galton, *Memories*, 3.

⁶ *Business History* 9, 2, (1967), 146.

⁷ Galton, *Memories*, 8

⁸ Samuel Parr to Thomas William Coke, 16 November 1812, in Anna Maria Diana Wilhelmina Pickering [Mrs Stirling], *Coke of Norfolk and his Friends*, 2 vols. (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1908), 104–107.

⁹ For Galton, Darwin, Wedgwood pedigree charts see Appendix 8 in Pearson, *Life*.



Samuel Tertius Galton (1783–1844)
by Octavius Oakley, 1836.



Frances Anne Violetta Darwin (1783–1874)
from a painting by Thompson made at the
time of her marriage in 1807.

Source: K.Pearson, *Life of Francis Galton* (1914–30)

Octavius Oakley (1800–1867) was a watercolour painter who lived in Leamington Spa in 1836, later moving to London. He became well-known for both his fashionable portraits and for his paintings of gypsy life, which earned him the epithet Gipsy Oakley.

Francis Galton was the last of nine children born to Samuel Tertius Galton and Violetta Darwin. Two sisters Agnes Jane and Violetta died in infancy. The youngest of his four surviving sisters Elisabeth Ann (1808–1906) was eleven years older than Francis, followed by Lucy Harriot (1809–48), Milicent Adèle (1810–83) and Emma Sophia (1811–1904). His brothers, Darwin (1814–1903) and Erasmus (1815–1909), eight and six years his senior were too old to be companionable. And though disadvantaged by being the ‘late and somewhat solitary member of a large family’ he had the advantage of being a clever child whose parents and siblings were willing to give him their special attention.¹⁰ Elisabeth recalled ‘never was a baby more welcomed. He was the pet of us all, and my mother was obliged to hang up her watch, that each sister might nurse the child for a quarter of an hour ... He was a great amusement.’¹¹ It was in this loving environment that Francis began his education with Adèle his first teacher.¹² She taught

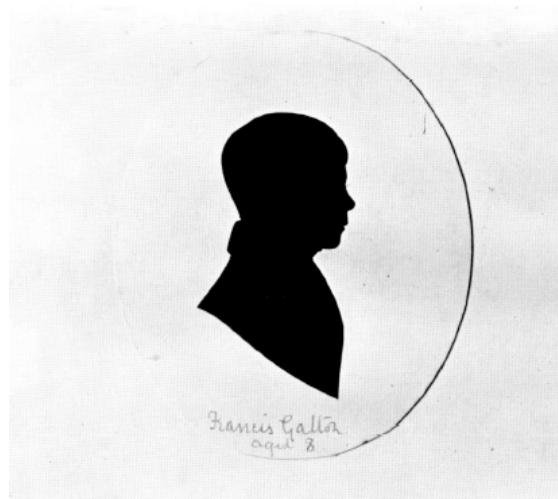
¹⁰ Pearson. *Life*, 1: 63.

¹¹ Elisabeth Ann Galton, *Reminiscences*, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 63.

¹² *Ibid.*, 63.

him English, entomology, natural history and honed his observational skills.¹³ The gardens around the Larches were perfect for bird-watching, collecting insects and enacting stories from Sir Walter Scott.

At five this child whose ‘activity of body could only be equalled by the activity of his mind’¹⁴ enrolled in a ‘dame school,’ run by a Mrs French who noted that ‘the young gentleman was always found studying abstruse sciences.’¹⁵ Three years later he was sent to boarding-school in Boulogne. ‘It was erroneously supposed,’ Galton speculated, ‘that I should learn French there and acquire a good accent.’¹⁶ Instead he had a miserable time and was glad when, in June 1832, he was taken away from a school where corporal punishment was the norm.¹⁷



Francis Galton aged 8. A silhouette taken from Violetta Galton’s *Life History of Francis Galton* written on the occasion of his going to school in France in 1830. Source: K. Pearson, *Life of Francis Galton* (1914–30)

¹³ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 67.

¹⁴ Violetta Galton, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 67.

¹⁵ Cited in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 67.

¹⁶ Galton, *Memories*, 16.

¹⁷ Galton, *Memories*, 17–18.

His family had now moved to a new house at Leamington ‘a little place attractive to many eminent invalids who drank the waters and consulted Dr Jephson.’¹⁸ On 5 February 1832 Elizabeth Collier-Darwin had died followed by Samuel John Galton on 10 June. ‘With the death of his father Samuel, Tertius— already a wealthy man—became more so, and the future independence of the members of his family was assured,’ and it was this wealth ‘that freed Francis Galton from any necessity for following a profession.’¹⁹

As Francis saw it their new status ‘justified the change of residence’ that gave him and his sisters ‘a wider social intercourse’ than had been possible at the Larches.²⁰ He continued his education at a small school where Rev. Attwood ‘showed so much sympathy with boyish tastes that [he] began to develop freely.’ Matthew and Hugh Boulton, grandsons of the founder of the Boulton and Watt steam-engine company, were class-mates and in their company he learned carpentry and played cricket in his free time.²¹

At fourteen Galton began at King Edward’s School Birmingham where a new reforming headmaster Dr. [Francis] Jeune (1806–68) had been appointed.²² Jeune left before a new curriculum was introduced in 1837.²³ Francis found the old classical curriculum ‘uncongenial’ to his temperament. What he wanted was ‘an abundance of good English reading, well-taught mathematics and solid science.’²⁴

His parents envisioned that he follow Darwin family tradition and become a physician. And Tertius, always wanting to encourage his learning, next arranged with Prof. Joseph Hodgson (1788–1869) that Francis should enter Birmingham General Hospital in the autumn of 1838. He also suggested he accompany Hodgson’s pupil William Bowman

¹⁸ Galton, *Memories*, 18.

¹⁹ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 74–75.

²⁰ Galton, *Memories*, 18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

²² *Ibid.*, 20.

²³ C. E. Mathews, *The Grammar School of King Edward VI in Birmingham*. Report of the Proceedings of the Town Council, 1842, in Conrad Gill, *History of Birmingham* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 1: 389, 390.

²⁴ Galton, *Memories*, 20.

(1816–92) on a European tour that would combine ‘the pleasure of travel with inspection of continental medical practice.’²⁵ In June Francis joined his sisters in London for Queen Victoria’s coronation.²⁶ He left soon after on a tour that mixed hospital inspections with museum visits. Returning to England he immediately commenced medical studies.²⁷

His program was intense: ‘Attended a post-mortem and dissection two days ago—Horror—Horror—Horror! I do not know when I shall get over the impression.’ He had attended the woman he was now dissecting.²⁸ Birmingham was followed by a year at Kings College London where, while gazing out college windows, ‘a passion for travel seized me as if I had been a migratory bird,’ and again Tertius arranged for him to join a scientist, the chemist William Miller (1817–70), on a Continental tour. Beginning July 1839 the pair travelled through Germany down the Danube and overland to Constantinople returning via Italy and France.²⁹

Before leaving Francis had expressed a desire to read mathematics at Cambridge enlisting the support of his cousin to persuade his father: ‘I have spoken to Charles Darwin about Cambridge, who recommends next October to read Mathematics like a house on fire’ and Tertius agreed.³⁰ He began at Trinity in October 1840 but in his third year suffered a ‘nervous breakdown’ the result of a demanding curriculum, ‘pernicious examination system’ and worry about his father’s health.³¹ He gave up reading for the mathematical ‘Tripos’ (honours degree) and settled for a ‘poll’ (ordinary degree) graduating BA in January 1844. He stayed in Cambridge till June 1844. And in a sign of future interests told Tertius that he was ‘trying some new ways of taking cases by lines drawn under each particular symptom varying according to its severity ... like the ordinary plans of statistical charts.’³² In October 1844 Tertius died. The loss, Elizabeth recalled, was

²⁵ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 92–94.

²⁶ A first-hand account is given in Andrew Moilliet, ed. *Elizabeth Ann Galton (1808–1906): A Well-Connected Gentlewoman* (Leonie Press, 2003), 119–126.

²⁷ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 98.

²⁸ Letter to Tertius Galton dated 10 November 1838, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 100.

²⁹ Galton, *Memories*, 48.

³⁰ Letter to Tertius Galton dated 6 December 1839, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 110.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

³² *Ibid.*, 184–85.

keenly felt: ‘All our occupations and pleasures were so connected with him ... that everything now seems a blank and it will be a very long time before we shall cease to be constantly reminded of him in everything we do.’³³

Galton’s father’s death ‘removed the main bond that kept our family together, and we soon became more or less separated.’³⁴ Francis abandoned medicine and having come into a ‘competent fortune’ was free to pursue his interests.³⁵

Between 1844 and 1849 he began travelling in the Middle East ‘without a map and without purpose,’ followed by hunting and shooting in Scotland.³⁶ But intellectually restless, in 1849 he wrote his first scientific article *Telotype, a Printing Electric Telegraph* in response to the new invention.³⁷

He was offered an opportunity to travel to southern Africa under the patronage of the Royal Geographic Society and these travels, made with the Swedish naturalist Charles John Andersson (1827–67), marked the beginning of his scientific ‘reawakening.’ It also marked his first effort at human measurement.³⁸ He receives the gold medal of the Royal Geographic Society. The book of his journey, *Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa* (1853) was followed by the *The Art of Travel* (1855).³⁹ He soon became part of the Victorian scientific elite.

At a Twelfth Night party (5 January) 1853 Francis met Louisa Jane Butler (1822–97) daughter of Dr George Butler (1774–1853) Dean of Peterborough and former headmaster of Harrow. They were married on 1 August 1853. There would be no children. The

³³ Elizabeth Ann Galton, in Pearson *Life*, 1: 193.

³⁴ Galton, *Memories*, 82.

³⁵ Forrest, *Victorian Genius*, 27; Milo Keynes, ‘Sir Francis Galton—A Man of Universal Scientific Curiosity’ in *Sir Francis Galton, FRS* (London: The Galton Institute, 1993), 8; Galton, 1884, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 199.

³⁶ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 197.

³⁷ Galton, *Memories*, 110–120; Francis Galton, *The Telotype: A Printing Electric Telegraph*, Cambridge: John Weale, 1850.

³⁸ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 211–242.

³⁹ Galton, *Memories*, 122.

marriage may have been more intellectual than romantic with Louisa, through her diary, playing the ‘prescribed role as a chronicler of her husband’s achievements.’⁴⁰ Yet Galton described their forty-year union as ‘that happy marriage,’ the details of which would be of little interest to others.⁴¹ He famously protested against those who thought marriage only concerned the couple. It created, rather, the ‘wider effect of [acting as] an alliance between each of them and a new family.’⁴² His social world was that of the intellectual aristocracy and he seldom went much beyond it.⁴³ They went to Switzerland and Italy for their honeymoon returning to England in March 1854. Thereafter following the ‘usual routine’ of people of their class they travelled every year making the health spas of Europe their preferred destination.⁴⁴

At least one Galton scholar speculates that Galton’s interest in heredity and individual difference dates from the time when, in his forties, it looked like the marriage would be childless. Since neither of Galton’s brothers and none of Louisa’s sisters had children the writer presumes the infertility was genetic.⁴⁵ It is likely his interest was both personal and intellectual. In 1859 Darwin had published *Origin of Species* which greatly influence the direction of his own eventual research.⁴⁶ Galton told Darwin that *Origin* had ‘created a real crisis’ in his life, and given him the ‘freedom of thought’ to pursue his ideas.⁴⁷

He first focussed on meteorology, making a contribution in 1863 when he published his ‘development of the theory of cyclones’ for the Royal Society.⁴⁸ The first weather-map was printed in the *Times* on 1 April 1875. In 1860 Galton became editor of *Vacation*

⁴⁰ Cynthia Huff, ‘From Faceless Chronicler to Self-creator: The Diary of Louisa Galton, 1830–1896.’ *Biography* 10, 2 (1987): 95–106; Clinton Machann, *The Genre of Autobiography in Victorian Literature* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 145–157.

⁴¹ Galton, *Memories*, 154.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 158.

⁴³ Donald A. MacKenzie, *Statistics in Britain, 1865–1930: The Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1981), 52.

⁴⁴ Galton, *Memories*, 158–159.

⁴⁵ Forrest, *Victorian Genius*, 85.

⁴⁶ Allan R. Buss, ‘Galton and the Birth of Differential Psychology and Eugenics: Social, Political, and Economic Forces.’ *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1976) 12: 47–58.

⁴⁷ In Pearson, *Life*, 2: 4–5.

⁴⁸ Elaborated in *Meteorographica, or Methods of Mapping the Weather* (1863). See Crispin Tickel, ‘*Meteorographica* and Weather,’ in *Sir Francis Galton, FRS: The Legacy of His Ideas*, 54–61.

Tourists and Notes on Travel, published annually and recounting the travels of young men abroad.⁴⁹ Observing a solar eclipse in Spain on 18 July 1860—a ‘wonderful sight’—he published a description of it in *Vacation Tourists* in 1860.⁵⁰ He loved the Pyrenees, returning often with Louisa. In 1864 he wrote *A Knapsack Guide for Travellers in Switzerland* his last formal effort as a travel writer.⁵¹

In the following years he turned his attention increasingly to individual difference and heredity. In 1863 he published ‘Hereditary Talent and Character’ followed by *Hereditary Genius, its Laws and Consequences* (1869) and *English Men of Science, their Nature and Nurture* (1874). To get his information [data] he introduced the use of questionnaires for the first time while concurrently adopting the ‘euphonious catchphrase “nature and nurture”’ to explain the focus of his enquiry.⁵² In these and other writings he argued that mental, like physical, abilities are transmitted from parents to offspring and that gifted parents often produce gifted children. He set out to show that ability, like everything else, is distributed according to the ‘curious theoretical law of “deviation from the average”’ shown by the familiar bell-curve.⁵³ To support his argument he turned to statistics thereby inventing essential research tools for the biological and social sciences: the co-efficient of correlation and regression analysis.⁵⁴ These could be used to show the degree to which any characteristic [or variable] deviated from the average [or mean] in an array or sequence and to predict the rate of change that might occur if one of those variables was altered in any way.

⁴⁹ Galton, *Memories*, 187.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 186-188; Francis Galton, ‘Visit to North Spain at the Time of the Eclipse.’ *Vacation Tourists and Notes on Travel in 1860*. F. Galton, ed. (London: Macmillan, 1860), 422–454; Pearson, *Life*, 2: 6–11.

⁵¹ Galton, *Memories*, 191.

⁵² Francis Galton, ‘Hereditary Talent and Character.’ *Macmillan’s Magazine* 12 (1865): 157–166; Raymond E. Fancher, *Pioneers of Psychology* 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996).

⁵³ Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences* (1869; reprint London: Thoemmes Press, 1998), vi, 26.

⁵⁴ Galton, *Memories*, 303; *See also* Francis Galton, ‘Co-relations and their Measurement, Chiefly from Anthropometric Data.’ *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, 45 (1888), 135–145.

He pioneered twin-study in ‘The History of Twins, as a Criterion of the Relative Power of Nature and Nurture’ (1875).⁵⁵ *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (1883) followed. A major work in psychology it was particularly concerned with the variety of human nature and its outward expression, and contained chapters on anthropometry and the use of statistics to understand physical phenomena. It was also the work in which Galton first use the word ‘eugenic’ to describe the science of race-improvement, an idea that at the time received scant support.⁵⁶

His motto was ‘whenever you can count’ and he applied this imperative resolutely.⁵⁷ In 1884 he set up an anthropometric laboratory where visitors could have their ‘chief physical characteristics measured and recorded,’ and take part in psychophysical and reaction-time experiments.⁵⁸ He offered prizes for families to fill an elaborate questionnaire to record their biometric details.⁵⁹ The results obtained were published in *Natural Inheritance* (1889) which brought together most of his ideas in a series of essays still influential in the twenty-first century.⁶⁰ ‘But the chief value’ was the ‘convenience it afforded for the obtaining and testing of finger-prints’ and he was delighted when the Home Office inquiring into ‘systems of identification ... for use with criminals’ showed an interest.⁶¹

⁵⁵ In *Frazer’s Magazine*, 12 (1875), 566–576; revised version reprinted in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 5, (1875), 391–406; Summary in *Nature*, 13 (1875), 59.

⁵⁶ John Carl Flügel, *A Hundred Years of Psychology: 1833-1933. With an additional part: 1933-1963*, by Donald J. West (London: Duckworth, 1964); Gardner Murphy and Joseph K. Kovach, *Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972); Buss, Galton and Birth of Differential Psychology, 47–58. It later developed a ‘small but appreciative audience’ Galton, *Memories*, (319).

⁵⁷ Derrek William Forrest, ‘Francis Galton (1822–1911).’ In R. Fuller, ed. *Seven Pioneers of Psychology: Behaviour and Mind* (London: Routledge, 1995), 3.

⁵⁸ Francis Galton, ‘On the Anthropometric Laboratory at the Late International Health Exhibition.’ *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 14, (1885): 205–218; Galton, ‘Retrospect of Work Done at my Anthropometric Laboratory at South Kensington.’ *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 21, (1891): 32–35.

⁵⁹ One-hundred-and-ten families responded and Galton used their details to write *Record of Family Faculties* (London: Macmillan, 1884), *Life-History Album* (London: Macmillan, 1884) and *Natural Inheritance* (London: Macmillan, 1889).

⁶⁰ Michael G. Bulmer, *Francis Galton: Pioneer of Heredity and Biometry* (Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

⁶¹ He published his results in *Finger Print Directory* (1895). See Ch. XV in Pearson, *Life*, 2: 138–216; Galton, *Memories*, 252, 254, 255.

In 1901 Galton became first consulting editor for the new journal *Biometrika* a role he had filled with the journal *Nature* thirty years before. A year later he received the Darwin Medal from the Royal Society.⁶² He continued to write on heredity and on finger-prints and with typical humour one of his last experiments was called ‘Cutting a round Cake on Scientific Principals.’⁶³ He wrote his memoirs in 1908 and in them ‘paid tribute to the memory of [Gregor] Mendel (1822–84)’ whose papers had recently been re-discovered and whose ideas and experiments (leading to the concept of dominant and recessive genes), along with Charles Darwin’s he greatly admired.⁶⁴ In 1909 he was knighted. He died on 17 January 1911.

Francis Galton is remembered today as a psychologist, bio-statistician and, controversially, eugenicist. But he began his long, sixty-year, career as an explorer, geographer, anthropologist and author achieving early fame in these roles. This achievement was based on a family tradition which respected enterprise in commerce, the arts and sciences, and whose members historically had made significant contributions in many fields. Francis Galton was aware of his background, but had to make his own mark. The following chapter explores how young Galton begins the process of leaving home and exploring the world. It begins with the self-stated recognition that he could not remain home with his mother and sisters and that in active roaming, beginning at a ‘critical moment,’ in his life, he might begin the process of individuation and achievement that he seeks.

⁶² See Appendix 1, for honours bestowed.

⁶³ Reported in a letter to Millicent Lethbridge, 7 November, 1906, in Pearson, *Life*, 3a: 124.

⁶⁴ Galton, *Memories*, 308.

2 Travels in Egypt, Sudan, Syria

In this chapter Galton begins the process of engaging in outwardly-oriented activities which will partly define his masculine status. He was now, for the first time, free of the constraints of family and an education determined by the wishes of his parents, and defined by sister Adèle. In 1844, on the death of his father, he abandoned all plans to become a physician.¹ With a restless craving for change he entered the phase of his life called the ‘fallow years,’ a period producing few sources that might reveal his thoughts and activities at this time.² And one to which most writers give only scant attention. Instead, we have a summary of those events ‘written from memory’ from the vantage point of 1885. Yet it was, as the following chapter demonstrates, a time which even Pearson recognised as having the turbulent characteristics of adolescence; and to which he referred as Galton’s ‘apprenticeship.’³



Francis Galton by Octavius Oakley.

Watercolour 1840. 13 ¼ in. x 10 ½ in. (337 mm x 267 mm).

© National Portrait Gallery, London.

¹ Galton, *Memories*, 82.

² Pearson, *Life*, 1: 85; Nicholas Wright Gillham, *A Life of Sir Francis Galton, From African Explorer to the Birth of Eugenics*, (Oxford: The University Press, 2001), 47.

³ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 85.

Galton himself regarded the years between 1844 and 1849 as marking the beginning of his adulthood. It was during this time that he moved away, physically, emotionally and even spiritually from the home-environment in which he had grown and now outgrown. He had left behind the tutelage of his sister Adèle; and as the youngest led a somewhat solitary life.⁴ ‘For though,’ he wrote, ‘I joined my other two unmarried sisters in their social amusements, I was always treated by them and their companions as a boy, and I felt during this time like an only child with aunts.’⁵ Their affection for him was deep, as was his for them, ‘but it was not and could not be reciprocated on equal terms.’⁶ They had given him the ‘priceless treasure of a home, in which each member knew the essential characteristics, good and bad, of all the others, and who loved each other all the same, and would support him or her through thick and thin.’⁷ And with this certain knowledge, and with their father’s legal affairs wound up, the ‘family gradually adapted to their new conditions.’⁸

Francis, wanted adventure and a ‘complete change,’ admitting that he still ‘had many “wild oats” to sow.’ So he started for Egypt. That he should do so is, perhaps, not surprising since the developmental task that lay ahead of him would mark his entry into adult male society. ‘Young men’ like Francis ‘were expected to roam, to seek adventure, to go out from as well as return to the home.’⁹ To do otherwise was not an option.

Becoming a man

involved detaching oneself from the home and its feminine comforts ... and depended on the recognition of manhood by one’s peers in an atmosphere which had as much to do with competition as camaraderie. Attaining manhood could not therefore be blandly described as a

⁴ Galton, *Memories*, 83.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 83. ‘The social contacts of children and adolescents with the opposite sex were often so restricted that kin offered the only emotionally sustaining relationships ... Relations between brother and sister, being based on daily contact, were potentially ... intense.’ John Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, 109. Galton appears to acknowledge this.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁹ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 405.

natural process, or a matter of filling one's niche. It made more sense to describe it as a period of conflict, challenge and exertion.¹⁰

The goal of this exertion was independence.¹¹

At the end of October 1844 Francis travelled to London, staying with Frederick Waymouth Gibbs who later became tutor to the Prince of Wales the future King Edward VII and H. Vaughan Johnson 'who had lived on the same staircase' at Trinity.¹² His original plan had been to travel with Henry Hallam (1824–50).¹³ But Hallam was still at Cambridge, and in an apologetic letter declined owing to the demands of finishing his degree.¹⁴ So around October 1845 compelled by a 'passion for movement and travel' Francis went on alone.¹⁵

Francis then proceeded to Malta. On board a steamer bound from Malta to Alexandria Galton found Cambridge chum Montagu Boulton, and his friend Hedworth Barclay, who had been travelling in Greece.¹⁶ Since they were also 'intending to go up the Nile' they all 'went together to Cairo ... towed up the Nile by a tug' and had 'a most luxurious' experience.¹⁷ So pleasant that they decided to continue together. Barclay's Greek servant Christo was hired as cook; Boulton's servant Evard was taken on as butler and keeper of accounts; and Francis hired Ali, a guide who helpfully spoke Arabic.¹⁸ They first spent some time in Cairo a 'city of bazaars made vibrant by manifold combinations of light and shade, colour, costume, and architectural detail.'¹⁹ A half-European, half-Oriental city

¹⁰ John Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 110.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹² See Christopher Hibbert, *Edward IV: A Portrait* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1976), 12; Pearson, *Life*, 1: 196.

¹³ Henry Fitzmaurice Hallam (1824–50) brother of Arthur Henry Hallam (1811–33) whose death inspired Alfred Tennyson's (1809–92) *In Memoriam* (1849).

¹⁴ In Pearson, *Life*, 3b: 354.

¹⁵ Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 199.

¹⁶ Galton, *Memories*, 85; Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 200.

¹⁷ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 200.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Amelia B. Edwards, *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile* (1877; reprint, with an introduction by Quentin Crewe, London: Century Publishing, 1982), 4.

crowded with people of ‘every shade of complexion from fair to dark, from tawny to ... deepest bronze to bluest black.’²⁰

They spent a day shooting boar; unsuccessfully.²¹ Then moved on. To do so required a passport from the ruler of Egypt, Mehmet Ali (1769–1849).²² This would give permission to travel and allow them to ‘impress men to pull up their boat at certain well-known places where the current was very strong.’²³ Barclay received an audience, the passport, and returned to begin the task of hiring a *dahabeyah*. This lateen-sailed flat-bottomed Nile boat carried two masts; a big one near the prow, a smaller one at the stern. There were cabins on deck with the roof serving as an open-air drawing-room and below deck a charcoal stove and stew-pans made a rudimentary kitchen.²⁴



Fostat [Old Cairo], Dahabeih in Full Sail on the River, 1886, by Elizabeth Butler in *From Sketchbook and Diary*, 1909.

Source: Mary Evans Picture Library

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

²¹ Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 200.

²² Founder of modern Egypt, established a dynasty which lasted till 1952. Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A History of Egypt: From Arab Conquest to the Present* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press), 64.

²³ Galton, *Memories*, 86.

²⁴ Edwards, *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*, 39. Thomas Cook arrived in Egypt when the Suez Canal opened in 1869. See Edmund Swinglehurst, *Cook's Tours: The Story of Popular Travel*. Poole, Dorset: Blandford Press, 1982), 88, 92.

They christened their vessel *Ibis*. They found a captain, crew, and a ten-year old Arab boy called Bob to serve ‘as coffee-bearer and to make himself generally useful.’²⁵ Barclay ‘put on board a keg of his own porter, and so [they] started, intending to live luxuriously and in grand style.’²⁶ The mood was carefree. ‘Living all day barefoot and only half dressed’ they began the day with a swim followed by coffee and a pipe after which the voyage continued.²⁷ They passed the Old Temple complex at Karnak near Luxor where Francis was moved by the eerie beauty of the place: ‘going among them alone by moonlight and the silence broken rarely by the jackal. The feeling was so strong that it nearly made me faint away.’²⁸

At the First Cataract their *dahabeyah* was pulled up safely through the rapids and further along men were again needed to pull up the boat.²⁹ But to their chagrin they found that those available ‘had all been impressed by the owner of a small and dirty looking Egyptian boat, who they told us was a Bey.’³⁰ Annoyed by this inconvenience they threatened to throw him into the water and were astounded when their target responded in perfect French. The grey-bearded man proved more interesting than first assumed. An impression confirmed when they learned that he was Joseph Pons d’Arnaud Bey a French civil engineer in the service of the modernising Mehemet Ali who since his accession looked to European experts to achieve his aims.³¹

His task was to find the best method for extracting gold from the rivers that flowed into the Blue Nile near the border between Ethiopia and Sudan.³² D’ Arnaud had just returned from such an expedition and invited them to see his hut. What they entered was a small

²⁵ Galton, *Memories*, 86.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Galton, *Memories*, 86.

²⁸ Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 200.

²⁹ Amelia Edwards gives a vivid description of ‘double-pulling’ a vessel through the rapids in *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*, 194–197.

³⁰ Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 200.

³¹ Alan Moorehead, *The Blue Nile* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962), 189. *See also*, Robert O. Collins and Robert L. Tignor, *Egypt & The Sudan* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 50–80.

³² Paul Santi and Richard Hill, *The Europeans in the Sudan, 1834–1878* (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1980), 53.

perfectly clean well-ordered abode with a literary air pervading it. There were books and scientific instruments, which impressed Francis. Addressing his guests in passable English d'Arnaud explained that he had understood their intemperate remarks and that he forgave them. To atone they provided him with a good dinner conjured from the provisions they carried.³³ D'Arnaud quizzed them about their itinerary: 'Why do you follow the English routine of just going to the 2nd cataract and returning? Cross the desert and go to Khartoum.'³⁴ He could arrange for a Desert Sheikh familiar with the route to provision them with camels and take them to Berber for a moderate fee. Interested, and after a brief conference, they 'fell wholly into his plan.' Galton never forgot d'Arnaud and, in 1900, when presenting a paper in Cairo comparing the Egypt of 1846 to that of 1900 he spoke of the influence this 'chance meeting' had exerted on his life. Crediting it with converting his conception of travel from pleasure to purpose and ultimately 'suggesting scientific objects to my future wanderings.'³⁵

Bob would take the *dehabayah* to Wadi Halfa and wait till they returned. It was now January and they hoped to be back by March. On the following afternoon, guided by a relation of the Sheikh, they set out on camel-back across the sands making early camp in order to organise their gear. The following morning they started crossing a stony desert.³⁶ Strangers joined their slowly-moving caravan, including 'a man, his wife, baby and donkey, just like Joseph's flight.'³⁷ They made their way to Berber where the Pasha offered them lemonade made from his own limes, lodged them in a mud house and gave permission for them to hire a boat for their journey to Khartoum.³⁸ He also presented Francis with a monkey; he bought a second, and these two were his constant companions until he returned to England many months later.³⁹

³³ Galton, *Memories*, 87.

³⁴ Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 200.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 200; Pearson, *Life*, 3a: 158, 159. Francis Galton, 'Souvenirs d'Égypte.' *Bulletin de la Société Khédiviale de Géographie*, No. 7, Mai, 1900. Galton, *Memories*, 97.

³⁶ Galton, *Memories*, 89.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 89, 90.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

They hired a small one-masted boat. On the way they passed the ruins at Meroë the ancient capital of the Ethiopian Pharaohs and their Queens; they also passed the market town of Shendi where slaves were sold twice a week.⁴⁰

Finally they reached Khartoum. Situated on a strip of land formed by the confluence of the White Nile with the Blue Nile it was, then, little more than a ramshackle group of huts with a wagon-roofed hall where the Pasha held audience.⁴¹ Twenty years before travellers had described it as ‘vile, squalid and filthy’ but it was now an ‘outpost of civilisation where both European and Eastern wares were sold,’ and a magnet for traders and travellers of all description.⁴² Francis and his friends were about to meet one of them. They had heard of an extraordinary Englishman, who’d gone native, and decided to call on him: ‘We knocked at the door, were told to enter ... and came into the presence of a white man nearly naked ... with head shorn except for the Moslem tuft, reeking of butter, and with a leopard skin thrown over his shoulder.’⁴³

The semi-naked man was Mansfield Parkyns (1823–94). Described by his biographer as a ‘high spirited, imaginative and harmless nonconformist,’ Parkyns had been at Trinity where, like Francis, he had studied mathematics.⁴⁴ At Cambridge he got into some sort of ‘scrape,’ had left, and had been travelling in the East ever since.⁴⁵ Francis would later describe him ‘as perhaps the traveller most gifted with natural advantages for that career’ a ‘man who easily held his own under difficulties, won hearts by his sympathy, and could touch any amount of pitch without being himself defiled.’⁴⁶ As such he was able to show them the seamier side of Khartoum. Introducing them to ‘the greatest scoundrels ... that could be found anywhere in a room ... slave-dealers, outlaws and I know not what else.’⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Ibid; Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 201.

⁴¹ Galton, *Memories*, 92.

⁴² Moorehead, *The Blue Nile*, 188.

⁴³ Galton, *Memories*, 92.

⁴⁴ Duncan Cumming, *The Gentleman Savage: The Life of Mansfield Parkyns 1823–1894* (London: Century, 1987), 8.

⁴⁵ One of his daughters stated that her father had done nothing worse than decorate some of the statues in the courts at Trinity, a comment Cumming considered *ben trovato* [invented].

⁴⁶ Galton, *Memories*, 93.

⁴⁷ Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, I: 201.

Nevertheless, Francis was fascinated to meet these men: ‘With all their villainy there was something of interest in their talk, but I had soon quite enough of it. Still, the experience was acceptable, for one wants to know the very worst of everything as well as the very best.’⁴⁸

Parkyn took them on a cruise up the White Nile. It was a real surprise when coming to the meeting of the rivers, ‘to change from the Blue Nile, which sparkled and rushed like a clear Highland river, into a stagnant and foul but deep White Nile ... so stagnant, that when anchored at night the offal thrown overboard by the cook hung about the boat, and a man was sent each morning with a pitcher to get drinkable water from a distance.’⁴⁹

Hippopotami bobbed lazily in the water but were wary of approach.

Still, it was the hippopotami that forced an early end to their adventure. Boulton and Parkyns went out one night to shoot one of the animals and accidentally killed a cow drinking by the river’s edge. Realisation, lest the ‘poor cow’ be discovered by its owner led to flight, back to the boat, and escape.⁵⁰ Leaving Parkyns at Khartoum they sailed on to Matemma which lay on the opposite bank to Shendi. Here they hired camels to take the six-day journey across the Bayouda Desert to Dongola. By now Francis considered himself quite a cameleer and could tolerate long hours in the saddle. From Dongola they made their way back to Wadi Halfa where Bob awaited with the *dehabayah*. However it was now March and the hot desert wind, the Khamseen, was blowing across the country making the voyage back to Cairo unpleasant. At Cairo they rented a house and stayed a week. Finally, they parted. Barclay returned home to England, Boulton went to Syria and Francis sailed by steamer from Alexandria to Lebanon taking Ali, his two pet monkeys, and a newly acquired *ichneumon* [mongoose] with him.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid.; Galton, *Memories*, 93.

⁴⁹ Galton, *Memories*, 94. See Alan Moorhead, *The Blue Nile*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962), 3–14. See also, Alan Moorhead, *The White Nile* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1960).

⁵⁰ Galton, *Memories*, 95.

⁵¹ Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 203; Gillham, *Life of Sir Francis Galton*, 54.

The awakening in the early morning when sailing along the shores of Syria and seeing the Holy Land for the first time, is one of the living pictures in my memory.⁵²

While in quarantine at Acre [Akko] the governor, impressed by the story of his Egyptian journey, relaxed his restrictions. And for similar reasons he was lavishly ‘entertained in a most stately way at a palace of a Druse chief, situated among the hills.’⁵³ On leaving Acre they went to Beyrout [Beirut] where he bought two good riding horses for himself and Ali. To buy the horses he had to travel inland where after camping on ground intersected by ditches containing pools of stagnant water he caught some kind of ague which was to plague him for many years. This left him somewhat weakened and after making only irregular use of the horses they travelled on to Damascus where he settled in the house of an English doctor. Here he witnessed ‘some gorgeous Jewish domestic ceremonies ... and also took some elementary lessons in Hebrew ... for which the little I knew of Arabic made an excellent preparation.’⁵⁴ And, it was also here that faithful Ali died of ‘violent dysentery.’ Galton arranged for a tombstone and sent Ali’s belongings to his widow in Cairo along with some wages due to him together with a ‘little gift for herself.’⁵⁵ Then as the heat increased he moved to historic Aleppo before moving on to Aden where again he was guest of a Sheikh happy to entertain him. From Aden he travelled to Tripoli and ‘saw the most beautiful view on which my eyes ever rested’ when he first spied the Mediterranean through a gorge.⁵⁶ Then he turned back to Beyrout. In what seems to have been a difficult trip one of his horses fell to its death when it tumbled over a ravine on the mountainous coast road. Again laid low by ague and rendered unfit for more riding, he sold his other horse.⁵⁷

⁵² Galton, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 203.

⁵³ Galton, *Memories*, 102.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 203; *Memories*, 103

⁵⁶ Galton, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 203–204; *Memories*, 104–105.

⁵⁷ Galton, *Memories*, 105.

At Beyrout he again met Montagu Boulton who mischievously suggested a possible cause for the lassitude Galton was now suffering: ‘What an unfortunate fellow you are to get laid up in such a serious manner for, as you say, a few moments’ amusement.’⁵⁸

Francis, next found his way to Jaffa [Tel Aviv] on board a common collier, making himself comfortable with rugs on a cleaned corner of the deck.⁵⁹ At Jaffa, he hired a camel and made for Jerusalem.⁶⁰ There he decided to take the then uncommon journey to ‘follow the valley of the Jordan all the way to Tiberius [Sea of Galilee] to the Dead Sea’ on a raft’ of inflated water-skins which he himself assembled, attended by local Arab tribesman who occasionally assisted.⁶¹ It was ‘a hare-brained’ scheme and the raft was given up for a horse; on which, dressed in Arab headdress and accompanied by his escort he was brought ‘an important encampment of Bedouins, whose dress I had been instructed to wear, and on no account to appear in the hated Fez.’⁶² Though cordially received, he was watched. When he shot a desert partridge but failed to kill it, despatching it ‘English fashion, against the stock of my gun’ instead of slitting its throat Moslem fashion, whilst making an incantation, he caused inadvertent offence.⁶³ He was pleased to leave. After a short stay in Jericho he made his way to Jerusalem where mail awaited him including a letter from Adèle urging him to come home to help her sort out the affairs of her recently-deceased husband. And so ‘I set sail with my two monkeys homewards.’⁶⁴

He was quarantined in the Lazarette of Marseilles for ten days and, travelling via Paris, arrived in England in November 1846. In chilly London he was unable to find a

⁵⁸ Montagu Boulton to Francis Galton, 30 September 1846, in Pearson, *Life*, 3b: 454–455. It may have been a sexual encounter. There is a speculative discussion of Galton’s sexuality in Fancher, ‘Biography and Psychodynamic Theory,’ 99–115. A noticeable discrepancy exists between the placement of details regarding the malaria-like illnesses Galton reported in his 1885 account, and *Memories* (1908); the differences sufficient to cast doubt on the precise meaning of the cited letter. See also Forrest, *Victorian Genius*, 33, 34.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁶⁰ Galton, *Memories*, 105; Gillham, *Life of Francis Galton*, 55.

⁶¹ Galton, *Memories*, 106.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 107.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 108; Galton, 1885, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 205.

comfortable lodging for his pets and placed them in the care of an old friend who owned a flat. The friend ‘handed them with many instructions to his landlady’ who disliked the animals and ‘shut them in the scullery where they were found the next morning dead in one another’s arms.’⁶⁵

Then Francis returned to Leamington, ‘much in need of a little rest.’⁶⁶ He was, he believed, ignorant of the life of a country gentleman.⁶⁷ And so began a new phase of his education that would make up for this deficit; a necessary step in his achievement of independent manhood of which his ‘grand tour’ of Egypt had been a part.⁶⁸ The journey just ended, while not a scientific one had, nevertheless, provided him with important skills for the major exploration he would later undertake. He had ‘acquired practical skills necessary to the traveller ... learnt how to organise a camp ... handle unfamiliar animals ... maintain direction by sun and stars ... and necessarily learned self-reliance.’⁶⁹ He had also gained knowledge of other cultures and developed a respect for the religion of the Arabs that would eventually broaden into ‘a wider view of the origin and function of religion in general.’⁷⁰ What began with the death of his father and a desire to ‘sow his wild oats’ in travel became a pivotal event in his development. Of such importance that writing of it some sixty years later he was able to say that ‘this little excursion formed one of the principle land marks of my life.’⁷¹

In the following chapter the next phase of Galton’s personal development is explored and highlights, as Galton did, those activities the accomplishment of which were deemed necessary in order to be more fully integrated into middle-class male society. Implicitly and explicitly stated, as shown in Chapter 2, is the need to separate from female society; to demonstrate identification with a male viewpoint through participation in outdoors activities; joining particular kinds of, especially sporting, clubs and through membership

⁶⁵ Galton, *Memories*, 109.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 205.

⁶⁹ Forrest, *Victorian Genius*, 35.

⁷⁰ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 207.

⁷¹ Galton, *Memories*, 97.

of these mastering skills fostering self-reliance. Galton seeks to test himself in the company of other young men by hunting and shooting in Scotland,

3 Masculine Pursuits

In this chapter Galton identifies a gap in his education. He was already aware, an indication, perhaps, of a growing self-awareness generally, that he did not share all the interests of other males in his family, particularly those of older brother Darwin: ‘Our ideals of life differed to an almost absurd degree: he had not the slightest care for literature or science, and I had no taste for country pursuits.’¹ Yet it was these (masculine) pursuits that he would have to master. For as Davidoff and Hall put it, ‘with all the loving care, boys [of the middle-class] still had to learn that they were made of sterner stuff’ than their sisters.² Thus, when recalling the period between 1845 and 1849 in *Memories* Galton remembered a time when guided by Darwin Galton he ‘began to hunt at the rate of about three days per fortnight in Warwickshire’ and ‘at neighbouring meets.’³ Pearson, disapprovingly, considered the three years his idol spent gadding about with the ‘hunting set’ as being ‘chiefly noteworthy for their extravagance and recklessness.’⁴ Francis thought otherwise: He read a great deal, and thought much about what he read.⁵

He was obsessive, dedicating himself wholly to new experience: ‘I established myself at Leamington, jobbed horses, and hunted *methodically*,’⁶ as, at barely five, he had methodically mastered, he bragged, ‘the Latin Substantives and Adjectives ... 52 lines of Latin poetry’ and the ability to ‘multiply by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, [9], 10. [11].’⁷

By beginning hunting and shooting he entered a world of masculine pursuit that had, from the eighteenth century ‘remain[ed] a central feature of rural life’ for young men.⁸

¹ Galton, *Memories*, 84.

² Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 344.

³ Galton, *Memories*, 110.

⁴ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 208, 209.

⁵ Galton, *Memories*, 119.

⁶ Galton, *Memories*, 110. Emphasis added.

⁷ Cited in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 66.

⁸ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 405, 406.

‘[Fox]hunting was [also] the traditional mixing place for the three tiers of the English countryside, for even labourers followed the hunt on foot, and hunting was often claimed to be the social cement which bound the classes together.’⁹ While supporting rural social and economic ties by ‘keeping gentlemen resident in the country,’ hunting also ‘provided an ideal form of male bonding for all classes.’¹⁰ And fox-hunting, in particular, which had originally been regarded as an activity of elderly country squires had become fashionable.¹¹ In the nineteenth-century, hunting ‘continued to be justified on the grounds that it was conducive to manliness,’ wherein manliness was regarded as much more than just simple physical courage but also ‘included such virtues as hardiness, temperance, coolness and clear headedness. It was considered as much a mental as a physical trait.’¹²

Boys became men ... by cultivating the essential manly attributes – in a word *manliness*. Energy, will, straightforwardness and courage were the key requirements. Sometimes there was an implied claim to natural endowment; more often manly bearing was taken to be the outcome of self-improvement and self-discipline. This aspect was explicit in what was for the Victorians the key attribute of manliness – independence. The term meant more than freedom (its principle association in the eighteenth century); it suggested autonomy of action and opinion.¹³

This was a test.¹⁴ Biographers are perhaps mistaken when they dismiss this part of his life as a rudderless embarrassment rather than an important developmental interregnum.¹⁵ Having set himself apart from the feminine environment at home, at Leamington Galton could measure himself against other men.

⁹ Ibid., 406.

¹⁰ David C. Itzkowitz, *Peculiar Privilege: A Social History of Foxhunting, 1753–1885*. (Hassocks, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1977), 19. Davidoff and Hall., Ibid.

¹¹ Itzkowitz, *Peculiar Privilege*, 18.

¹² Ibid., 21.

¹³ Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, 111.

¹⁴ ‘Among most of the peoples that anthropologists are familiar with, true manhood is a precious and elusive status beyond mere maleness, a hortatory image that men and boys aspire to and that their culture demands of them as a measure of belonging ... Even [here], in Victorian England, a culture not given over to showy excess, manhood was an artificial product coaxed by austere training and testing.’ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 17, 18.

¹⁵ Gillham, *Life of Galton*, 56; Pearson, *Life*, 1: 208–210; Galton, *Memories*, 119.

There was a small “Hunt Club,” somewhat select, to which I belonged ... The hunting men ... included some who had considerable gifts ... Foremost among them was Jack Mytton, son of the more famous Jack Mytton (1795–1834) who was notorious for his daring feats and ... who wasted a large fortune and died unhappily ... The son’s career seemed moulded on that of the father, and he too wasted a fortune ... and died prematurely.¹⁶

That Frank had met John Fox Fitz-Gifford Mytton (1823–75) the son of the famed John ‘Mad Jack’ Mytton says something of the environment in which he found company at this time; and that, consequently, he chose to reject.¹⁷ Almost folkloric in reputation as a sportsman, Nimrod, John Mytton’s biographer, began his famous recount of the eccentric sporting-hero’s life with a genealogical account dating the lineage back to one Reginold de Mutton in the Reign of Edward III; placing him at the centre of the landowning and governing class at Halston in Shropshire in the medieval period.¹⁸ Daredevil, generous and nearly always drunk he lived his life in a destructive downward spiral that ended in delirium tremens and death in King’s Bench Prison on the 29 March 1834.¹⁹ ‘Never was a constitution so murdered as Mr Mytton’s was,’ wrote Nimrod. ‘On one occasion ... he followed some ducks ... stark naked on the ice, and escaped with perfect impunity.’²⁰

By the 1830s Leamington spa was becoming an important hunting town, boasting ‘hunting lodges and ... exclusive societies, the best known being the select Oyster Club.’²¹ Membership of such a club ‘was limited to the gentry,’ who ‘raised a subscription’ to pay for any damage they did, for ‘earth-stopping’ and ‘covert

¹⁶ Galton, *Memories*, 110.

¹⁷ G. F. R. Barker, ‘Mytton, John (1796–1834)’, rev. George C. Baugh, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19713>, accessed 6 Oct 2008]

¹⁸ Nimrod [Charles James Apperley], *Memoirs of the Life of the Late John Mytton, esq., By Nimrod* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1900), 16. *See also*, E. W. Bovill, *The England of Nimrod and Surtees, 1815–1854*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1959); John Welcome, *The Sporting World of R. S. Surtees* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

¹⁹ Nimrod, *Life of Mytton*, 85, 215.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31–32.

²¹ Phyllis May Hembry, Leonard W. Cowie and Evelyn E. Cowie, eds. *British Spas from 1815 to the Present* (London: Athlone, 1997), 17, 18.

expenses.²² The social life associated with hunting centred around the hunt-club, with breakfasts, male-only dinners and the Hunt Ball when ladies were invited. By the mid-1840s, when Galton became a member, ‘hunting was becoming the thing to do.’²³

Hunting at Leamington was followed by grouse-shooting in Scotland. A friend’s invitation to the Highlands could not be resisted. By August 1848 he was writing home to his mother that he was having a great time. ‘I enjoy myself more than I have for a year and a half—everything is so free and open. We have every variety of field sport,—pitch tents and hack ponies.’²⁴

Indeed the highlands, having undergone years of complex social change following the eighteenth-century clearances, were becoming established as a future gateway for the kind of leisure activity Frank was now pursuing.²⁵ Queen Victoria had also discovered the Highlands in 1848 when in September she made her first visit to Balmoral House; describing it in her journal as a ‘pretty little Castle in the old Scottish style [with] a picturesque tower and ... and hills all around.’²⁶ Balmoral fulfilled her need for privacy and acted as respite from affairs of state.²⁷ And, in words echoing those of Francis to his mother, Victoria wrote in her diary: ‘It was so calm, and so solitary, it did one good as one gazed around; and the pure mountain air was most refreshing. All seemed to breathe freedom and peace, and to make one forget about the world.’²⁸

Yet even while Francis observed that the ‘heather was beautiful out on the moors’ and enjoyed himself with ‘lots of fishing and really of everything,’ the re-making of the

²² Itzkowitz, *Peculiar Privilege* 97, 103. Earth stopping, closing entrances to underground burrows, ‘earths,’ carried out by an ‘earth-stopper’ before dawn. ‘Covert,’ the thicket hiding the game in the field.

²³ Itzkowitz, *Peculiar Privilege*, 48, 53, 55, 56, 57.

²⁴ *Ibid.* ‘To hack ponies.’ Ride hired horses.

²⁵ Tom Devine, ‘The Highland Clearances,’ *Refresh* 4 (1987): 5–8.

²⁶ Elizabeth Longford, *Victoria, R.I.* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964); Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands, 1848–1861*. Arthur Helps, ed. (London, 1868; reprint, London: The Folio Society, 1973), 29.

²⁷ Longford, *Victoria R.I.*, 210.

²⁸ Victoria, *Leaves*, 30, 31.

highlands continued. Along with famine, epidemics and emigration, as sheep replaced people.²⁹ Yet it was something that Galton seems not to have noticed. Concerned folk attempted to alleviate the distress in the aftermath of the famine that devastated both Ireland and Scotland following the failure of the potato-crop in 1846. One attendee at a public meeting called in 1847, to ‘consider best measures to be adopted for relieving the appalling distress which exists in Ireland and Scotland,’ told his audience that ‘notwithstanding all that ... was being done ... by public and private charity, thousands of their fellow creatures were dying for want of food.’ The distress,’ he continued, ‘had not been so severely felt in Scotland as in Ireland, but the population of the highlands and islands of Scotland, and especially the inhabitants of the Hebrides and of the Shetland Islands, were suffering great privation,’ forcing many to emigrate to Canada, Australia and New Zealand.³⁰

With the end of the hunting season he made his way to John o' Groats, remaining for the winter of 1848–9.³¹ The next year he spent the summer sailing, seal-shooting and bird-nesting. He was taught by the locals to hunt the stormy-petrels that made their nests in shingle-burrows; locating the birds by their ‘twitterings’ and their rank oily smell. According to locals ‘you could cram a wick ... down the gullet of a dried-up petrel, and light it,’ and it would ‘burn like a lamp.’³²

He left Scotland in the autumn of 1849 carrying a crate of live seabirds for his brother Darwin’s estate. But in a striking re-enactment of his sorry adventure with monkeys, ‘the railway people put the crate in a very exposed truck on a chill autumn night, which killed

²⁹ In Pearson, *Life*, 3b: 456; John Prebble, *The Lion in the North*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), 320, 321, 322, 323.

³⁰ *The Times*, 5 February, 1847. See Thomas Martin Devine and Willie Orr, *The Great Highland Famine: Hunger, Emigration and the Scottish Highlands in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988). See also William Pulteney Alison, *Observations on the Famine of 1846-7 in the Highlands of Scotland and in Ireland, as Illustrating the Connection of the Principle of Population with the Management of the Poor* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1847).

³¹ Galton, *Memories*, 112.

³² *Ibid.*, 114.

three quarters of them at least.³³ The surviving birds did thrive for a while at Edstone with the last bird, an oyster-catcher, coming to a sticky end one freezing night.

It had been freezing hard in the night, followed by soft snow, and then re-freezing.

Next morning they found the tracks of a fox on the snow-covered ice, going to a place where the yellow legs and nothing else of the bird remained frozen in. The oyster catcher's legs had been entrapped by the frost, and his body had been snapped up by the fox.³⁴

He made intermittent trips to London, and travelled through Wales and went on an evening balloon-ascent over Cremorne Gardens. That he later devoted four pages in his biography describing this event suggests that it remained in his memory a clear and exciting adventure. An ill-conceived effort to sail to Iceland by yacht brought this phase to a close: 'A fiasco!'³⁵

While in London Galton took the opportunity to obtain what today might be called 'personal counselling.' He had already tested himself physically.

By shooting, stalking, and other outdoor activities Victorian gentlemen tested their wills against their bodies, and their bodies against the environment, thereby strengthening their discipline, improving bodily and emotional health, and affirming that masculine identity demanded the physical and mental strength to conquer nature and one's own weakness ... Equally important ... there will have been breathed into him a new understanding of the inner spirit and instinct of the dwellers among the hills ... Such exertions were a relief ... from the mental struggle and intellectual uncertainties which wracked so many Victorians.³⁶

But acutely aware of the extravagant and unfulfilled lives of his peers at the hunt club; and equally conscious of his average performance at Cambridge, he sought guidance.

³³ Ibid., 114–115.

³⁴ Ibid., 116.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Katherine Haldene Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland, 1770–1914*. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 112–113.

He was always surpassed by at least a few of his peers and with his powerful desire for success and his privileged background, he could not easily attribute his relative [scholastic] failure to volitional or environmental deficiencies ... it must have confirmed his suspicion that he had failed because he lacked the innate gifts necessary for great success.³⁷

By consulting Mr Cornelius Donovan (c1820–72), chief phrenologist at the London Phrenological Institute, Francis Galton hoped to obtain an ‘objective assessment of his virtues and failings.’³⁸ It was not his first experience of having a phrenologist ‘paw his head,’ having undergone the procedure while at King Edward School.³⁹ It was something in which he would retain a sceptical interest in later years.⁴⁰

Donovan—who stressed that phrenology should be used to derive self-knowledge⁴¹—made a ‘shrewd assessment undoubtedly based on more than Galton’s cranial measurements.’⁴² Galton was not naturally studious; his strengths lay elsewhere: ‘There is much enduring power in such a mind as this—such that qualifies a man for “roughing it” in colonising ... As regards the learned professions I do not think this gentleman is fond enough of the midnight lamp to like them, or to work hard if engaged in one of them.’⁴³

Maybe this reading was enough to confirm an inclination to continue an active life. Precisely why his thoughts turned to Africa is unknown.⁴⁴ Perhaps the mysterious Captain Sayers, who he met on the Coventry and Leamington Omnibus on Monday 6th January 1840, stirred his imagination. A ‘great African traveller’ Sayers had shown him

³⁷ R. E. Fancher, ‘Biographical Origins of Francis Galton’s Psychology.’ *Isis* 74 (1983): 227–233.

³⁸ Forrest, *Victorian Genius*, 37; See Roger J. Cooter, *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science: Phrenology and the Handbook Organization of Consent in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). See also John van Wyhe, ‘Was Phrenology a Reform Science? Towards a New Generalization for Phrenology.’ *History of Science*, 13 (2004): 313–331; Allan S. Horlick, ‘Phrenology and the Social Education of Young Men.’ *History of Education Quarterly*, 2, 1, (1971): 23–38.

³⁹ Francis Galton to Tertius Galton, Brow Top, Keswick, 8 July, 1841, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 157.

⁴⁰ Pearson, *Life*, 3b: 577; Gillham, *Life of Francis Galton*, 57.

⁴¹ van Wyhe, ‘Was Phrenology a Reform Science?’, 317.

⁴² Fancher, *Biographical Origins*, 232.

⁴³ In Forrest, *Victorian Genius*, 37.

⁴⁴ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 214.

‘how to make a turban out of my plaid,’ and also proved an ‘agreeable’ travelling companion.⁴⁵ His own recent experience in Egypt and the ‘ready presence of mind which the hunting-field encouraged,’ had all prepared him for further manly exertion.⁴⁶

Thus in 1850 his ‘own inclination was to travel in South Africa, which had a potent attraction to those who wished to combine the joy of exploration with that of encountering big game.’⁴⁷ Also, ‘immense regions of Africa,’ were then so ‘utterly unknown,’ that he ‘could not but feel that there was every probability of much being discovered there, which, besides being new, would also be useful and interesting. A large field lay open to any explorer who might wish to attempt the enterprise, and I chose to undertake the task.’⁴⁸

The task he was about to undertake was no small one. He later claimed, it was ‘urged by an excessive fondness for a wild life.’⁴⁹ It may be, as has been suggested, that he was still under the influence of Arnaud and his injunction to go further than the ordinary tourist.⁵⁰ And, it may have been—and this of course is Pearson’s view—that he had a hereditary predisposition to be an adventurer.⁵¹

It was certainly the right time. He would be engaged in, and continuing, an enterprise begun in 1795 when ‘Joseph Banks (1744–1820) on behalf of the Africa Association engaged Mungo Park (1771–1806) to find the course of the Niger.’⁵² Thereby beginning one-hundred-and-fifty years of British involvement in the ‘dark continent.’⁵³ Park’s pioneering expeditions (the first made between 1795 and 1797; the second, from which he did not return, made between 1804 and 1806) were ‘a sort of “feasibility study,”’

⁴⁵ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 112–113.

⁴⁶ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 211–212.

⁴⁷ Galton, *Memories*, 122.

⁴⁸ Galton, *Tropical South Africa*, 2

⁴⁹ Francis Galton, ‘Recent Expedition into the Interior of South-Western Africa.’ *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 22 (1852): 140–163.

⁵⁰ Forrest, *Victorian Genius*, 38.

⁵¹ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 212.

⁵² Roy Lewis and Yvonne Foy, *The British in Africa* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971): 30.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, xvii, 1, 30.

which exposed the dangers of African travel while paving the way for ‘ever more elaborate techniques and instrumentation of African travel, from the one-man mission to the military expedition ... during the following hundred years.’⁵⁴

Interest in Africa continued throughout the nineteenth-century. Various motivated by the anti-slavery movement which attracted support from both government and missionary societies; by ‘the growing profession of science,’ spurred by the desire to collect and classify the flora and fauna of all nations; and by economic curiosity: Africa had always held the promise of great commodity wealth, something an empire-building nation could not ignore.⁵⁵ African explorers themselves were, usually, motivated by the sheer excitement of exploration; colourfully described in a journal which might eventually become a book. They also knew that a profitable career (and fame) could be built on travel into the unknown. ‘Africa, populous and varied, was bound to produce more excitement than travels in Australia or even the American West.’⁵⁶

And, after Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo ‘the whole world was open to British explorers and travellers.’⁵⁷ Peace reigned in Europe and Britannia ruled the waves. There was nowhere a British Navy vessel could not go and travellers, explorers, merchants and missions followed. The Foreign Office through its network of consuls gathered political and economic information about Africa and the world. Secure in the knowledge of their nation’s greatness the English went abroad. And as they returned, with remarkable tales to tell, the market for travel books grew; with Galton’s future publisher, John Murray, the first to benefit from his catalogue of African adventurers. But, arguably, the most important event in the history of African exploration happened in 1830 when the Royal Geographic Society was founded.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Ibid., 31; Christopher Fyfe, ‘Park, Mungo (1771–1806)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21278>, accessed 1 Dec 2008]

⁵⁵ Lewis and Foy, *British in Africa*, 31.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

The following chapter explores the origins of the Society in the learned and travel-clubs of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It examines the motives and effort of enthusiasts to put organised exploration on a scientific footing and give it a physical home. In particular Chapter 4 highlights the social origin of the RGS, and holds its creation to be a mirror to British scientific and political ambition during the mid-Victorian period. The RGS of the 1840s may also, in the context of this thesis, be regarded as representative of the kind of intellectual and social environment full membership of which Galton aspired. The RGS promised validation of Galton's effort to be taken seriously as a man and explorer. The developmental history of the Society as an organization, on a larger scale, in a sense reflects Galton's own.

4 The Ancestry of the Royal Geographic Society

This chapter explores the formative years of the Royal Geographic Society. It also discusses the extent to which its creation was born of a desire to explore the still largely unknown continent of Africa. It shows that the RGS in the late 1840s was, perhaps, the best organization to encourage and advance both Galton's personal confidence and his emerging scientific abilities. He wanted 'to have some worthy object as a goal and do more than just amuse myself.'¹ It was during the two years exploration in the harsh environment of southern Africa that the full dimension of the worthy object would be put to the test.

Galton's own awareness of Africa was influenced by his reading, particularly by 'Harris'[book] describing the enormous herds of diverse animals that he found on the grassy plains of South Africa.'² He was probably also familiar, from boyhood, with Mungo Park's 'best-seller' *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799) which must surely have been in a library in one of the Galton, Darwin or Wedgwood family homes, especially since Josiah Wedgwood had been a member of the travel and exploration society that had sent Park to Africa.³ Park in the Preface to *Travels* had acknowledged the patronage he had received from the society and modestly offered his narrative as a true account of his history-making expedition. It was, he wrote, a 'plain unvarnished tale, without pretensions of any kind, except that it claims to enlarge ... the circle of African geography.'⁴

That task was still unfulfilled when in 1849 Galton contemplated his own African adventure. 'Blank spaces in the map of the world were then both large and numerous ...

¹ Galton, *Memories*, 122.

² Probably *Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa, Drawn from Life in their Natural Haunts* (1840).

³ Timothy Severin, *The African Adventure: A History of Africa's Explorers* (London: Hamish Hamilton), 77.

⁴ Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799; reprint, Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1860).

and positions of many towns, rivers, and notable districts were untrustworthy.’⁵ Much of Africa remained unknown as did the vast interior of Australia and both Polar regions.⁶ This had been the situation since the eighteenth-century when those concerned with placing geography and related disciplines on a scientific footing made their first concerted efforts to rectify the situation. Enlightenment thinking demanded exactitude and an attitude free from the speculation of the past. Maps of Africa printed in Europe and Britain during the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century while often highly detailed, particularly with respect to coastal regions where most trade and observation had taken place, remained remarkably unclear about the interior. Inevitably they indicated unnamed rivers flowing from unexplained sources to the coast. Empty spaces were designated as territory inhabited by ‘a savage people’ or as simply ‘Hottentots.’ It was all guesswork; to such an extent that Jonathan Swift, in 1733, could humorously but accurately write that it was a time when

... geographers, in Afric maps,
With savage pictures fill their gaps,
And o’er unhabitable downs
Place elephants for want of towns.

A map printed in London in 1830 still bore a striking resemblance to one printed in Amsterdam in 1750.⁷ And one of Sharpe’s ‘corresponding maps,’ published in 1848, showing the southern half of the continent, which Galton may have seen, was still devoid of accurate topographical detail.⁸

The first society to make an effort to fill in these empty spaces was named the ‘The Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa’ later simply the African Association.

⁵ Galton, *Memories*, 121.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ A useful resource is the digital archive of original rare maps of Africa at www.afriterrra.org.

⁸ Two maps showing northern and southern Africa respectively.

Clubs and societies dedicated to cultural and scientific causes had long been part of British society.⁹ In the eighteenth-century the dining-club fulfilled this function with gentlemen getting together over dinner to discuss contemporary issues of concern. Twelve members of such a dining-club, the Saturday's Club, gathered every Saturday evening at the St Alban's Tavern near Pall Mall to talk about science and slavery.¹⁰ One of their number was the indefatigable Sir Joseph Banks (1744–1820) then president of the Royal Society. It was at a meeting—attended by nine of the twelve—convened at his home at 32 Soho Square in June 1788 that the association came into being; with Banks as director and treasurer and Quaker politician Henry Beaufoy (1750–95) as second-in-command.¹¹ The task they and the membership—who all paid an annual subscription of five guineas to support the organization's activities—set themselves was to send exploratory expeditions to Africa; and to find the right people to do the job. Particularly, the task was to find the exact location and course of the river Niger and the legendary 'city of gold,' Timbuktu.¹²

In succession John Ledyard, Simon Lucas, Daniel Houghton, Mungo Park, Friedrich Hornemann, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt and Henry Nicolls were sent to Africa. Ledyard, Houghton, Hornemann, Burckhardt and Nicholls never returned. Lucas partially crossed the Libyan Desert but tribal-warfare scuttled his plans and he barely made it back to England. Park succeeded in locating the Niger and determining its course but failed, in 1805, to return from a second expedition. Though Timbuktu was never found by emissaries of the Association valuable information was gained from those who

⁹ Ian Cameron, *To the Farthest Ends of the Earth: A History of the Royal Geographical Society, 1830–1980*. (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1980), 16; Anthony Sattin, *The Gates of Africa: Discovery, Death and the Search for Timbuktu* (London: Harper Collins, 2003); Anthony Sattin, 'A Giant Leap into Africa.' *Geographical*, 75, 11 (2003): 38–42.

¹⁰ Sattin, 'A Giant Leap,' 38.

¹¹ William Sinclair, 'The African Association of 1788.' *Journal of the Royal African Society* 1, 1, (1901): 145–149.

¹² Frank T. kryza, *The Race for Timbuktu: In Search of Africa's City of Gold* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006).

returned.¹³ Major Alexander Gordon Laing (1793–1826) finally entered Timbuktu on 18 August 1826. He was murdered in the desert on the night of 26 September 1826.¹⁴

By this time a new dining-club, The Raleigh Travellers' Club, was about to be formed and unlike the Association its members were mostly travellers.¹⁵ The African Association had remained active throughout the period although Banks had died in 1820. He was succeeded by Major James Rennell (1742–1830) the nation's leading geographer. But he too was infirm and when he died in 1830 the baton had already passed to a new generation of enthusiastic travellers.¹⁶

One of these was Captain Sir Arthur de Capell Broke (1791–1858). Sir Arthur had travelled extensively in Scandinavia and was about to publish *A Winter in Lapland and Sweden* (1827).¹⁷ A long-time member of another Traveller's Club he had become disillusioned by its lack of focus on foreign travel.¹⁸ To correct this he organised a dinner-meeting at the Thatched House Tavern on 7 February 1827, the purpose being to establish 'an agreeable, friendly and rational society formed by persons who have visited every part of the globe.'¹⁹ Thirty-nine men turned up including prominent members of the African Association. However, they did not wish to copy the activities of the Association nor sponsor missions abroad. Rather, theirs would be a social-club where members could get together to recount their travel adventures in a convivial atmosphere. To set the tone at this first meeting Sir Arthur provided a feast of reindeer venison from Spitzbergen,

¹³ Sattin, *Gates of Africa*; Timothy Severin, *The African Adventure: A History of Africa's Explorers* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1973); Stephen Gwynn, *Mungo Park and the Quest for the Niger* (London: John Lane and the Bodley Head, 1934).

¹⁴ Severin, *African Adventure*, 125, 126, 127; Kryza, *Race for Timbuktu*, 229.

¹⁵ Named in honour of the Elizabethan courtier and navigator Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618).

¹⁶ Sattin, *Gates of Africa*, 309; Severin, *African Adventure*, 104, 105.

¹⁷ Sattin, *Gates of Africa*, 337.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Baigent, 'Broke, Sir Arthur de Cappell, second baronet (1791–1858)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3534>. Accessed 25 Jan 2009].

¹⁹ Sattin, *Gates of Africa*, 337, 338.

rye-cake from North Cape, cheese from Norway, cloudberries from Lapland and brandy from Sweden.²⁰

The Raleigh Club was successful, but more was needed; a dedicated centre where expeditions could be planned and travellers' records stored. In 1828 a contributor to the *Literary Gazette* lamented 'the non-existence of a Geographical Society in England.'²¹ The writer argued that 'no country was as deeply interested as England in the acquisition of a correct knowledge of the physical, moral and political geography of the whole world.'²² Increasingly Britain and France were willing to mount costly expeditions into countries first explored by the African Association. The Association, with its declining membership could not compete. In this climate, the idea of a geographical society became a topic of discussion at Raleigh Club dinners.²³ And, at an extraordinary meeting convened on 24 May 1830—attended by a large group of enthusiastic members of both the Association and the Raleigh Club—Sir John Barrow (1764–1848), the man who masterminded the search for the North-West Passage, announced 'that a Society is needed whose sole object shall be the promotion of that most important and entertaining branch of knowledge — geography: and that a useful Society might therefore be formed, under the name of the Geographical Society of London.'²⁴

At that moment the African Association ceased to exist as the fourteen remaining members joined the new organization; while the Raleigh Club was re-constituted in the management of the new Geographical Society, with all positions on the committee taken by its members.²⁵ The Chairman was Sir John Barrow, who as Permanent Secretary to the Admiralty became a 'valuable ally for the Society.'²⁶ Other members were Dr Robert

²⁰ Ibid., 338. Cloudberries, a relative of the raspberry grow in Scandinavia, Canada and Siberia.

²¹ Sattin, 'A Giant Leap'; Sattin, *Gates of Africa*, 338, 339; *The London Literary Gazette and Journal of Belle Lettres*, Saturday September 20, 1828, 600. A letter first appeared 24 May, 1828. The world's first geographical society was the Sociétié de Géographie established in Paris in 1821, followed by Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin, in 1828.

²² *Literary Gazette*, 1828, 600.

²³ Cameron, *Farthest Ends*, 16; Sattin, *Gates of Africa*, 339.

²⁴ Sattin, *Gates of Africa*, 347.

²⁵ Cameron, *Farthest Ends*, 17.

²⁶ Ibid.

Brown (1773–1858) the botanist who had accompanied Matthew Flinders to Australia in 1800 and returned with about 3400 plant species of which 2000 had never been seen before;²⁷ John Cam Hobhouse (1786–1869) a politician and writer who had travelled with Lord Byron; Bartholomew (Bartle) Frere (1778–1851) diplomat and traveller in Spain; The Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779–1859) scholar and authority on India; and Roderick Impey Murchison (1792–1871) soldier, geologist, imperialist. Their first act was to invite a seventh member to join them on the Committee.²⁸ This was the ‘father of British oceanography’ the hydrographer Captain William Smyth (1788–1865) who in years to come would be instrumental in keeping the Society sailing, financially, on a steady course.²⁹

The Society soon had over 400 members attracted by the calibre and energy of the Committee and by a Society that welcomed any gentleman with a serious interest in geography.³⁰ And such were their connections that by the time of its first meeting on 16 July 1830 ‘the sailor king’ King William IV had agreed to become their patron, and thus the Royal Geographic Society (RGS) came into being.

The creation of the RGS made it possible for Galton to realise his dream for adventure. His sociability and connections allowed easy entry into this new organization with geography and exploration as its *raison d’etre*. The next chapter demonstrates that all that had gone before in travel, whether as an eight-year old school-boy to France, as a student-companion to scientific men on tours of Europe, as a restless young adult to the

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Cameron, *Farthest Ends*, 16, 17, 18. Frere was one of a number of British envoys responsible for bringing Spanish painting to Britain in the first decades of the nineteenth-century. See Nigel Glendinning, ‘Nineteenth-Century British Envoys in Spain and the Taste for Spanish Art in England.’ *Burlington Magazine* 131, 1031 (1989): 117–126.

²⁹ Ibid., 18.

³⁰ What became known as ‘the lady question’ first arose in 1847. The admission of women to the Royal Geographical Society was again discussed in 1887 when the Council gave in principle approval. It was decided to consider the matter and gauge the level of interest and support amongst women. This duly came and on 4 July 1892 the Council threw open admission ‘to both sexes on equal terms and conditions.’ See Morag Bell and Cheryl McEwan, ‘The Admission of Women Fellows to the Royal Geographical Society, 1892–1914; the Controversy and the Outcome.’ *The Geographical Journal*, 162, 3, (1996): 295–312.

middle-east and Scotland, could be counted as preparation for the greater challenge that the journey into Africa would prove to be. As Pearson noted his experiences of men and situations, and his awareness of his own talents were accumulative. Each journey marking a greater step to adult independence and full participation in a particular social world to which he aspired and through whose eyes he wished to be seen. Galton, as the following chapter shows, could now start to put this accumulated learning, enhanced by his natural gifts, into practice.

5 An African Adventure

This chapter describes the journey Galton made in Africa, in company with Charles John Andersson, who also sought to make a name for himself through travel. As the following pages reveal, Galton travelled in a land just opening to European trade and exploration; but whose geography, peoples, fauna and flora had long intrigued those with an interest in the world's undiscovered places. There were already adventurers, supported by the RGS, who had explored the continent; and their daring, achievement and written reports, fascinated the Victorian public. Travel in Africa required physical stamina and presence of mind. The conditions were harsh even treacherous; but Galton was eager to prove himself in this particular sphere, for the reward was, potentially, great.

Impressed by the status of the Society and the quality of its membership Galton sought advice from those in a position to advance his plans made at a time when the RGS was seriously investing in African exploration.¹

Galton later recalled that 'Gordon-Cumming had just returned to England,' and David Livingstone (1813–73), sportsman/explorer William Cotton Oswell (1818–93) and adventurer Mungo Murray had just travelled from the Cape to Lake Ngami, arriving on its north-east shore on 1 August 1849.² Crossing the Kalihari Desert, it was the first time the lake had been seen by Europeans.³

¹ Middleton, 'Francis Galton: Travel and Geography,' 46. Galton took a keen interest in exploration and was a regular contributor to both the publications of the RGS and less specialised magazines. See Francis Galton, 'Exploration in Arid Countries.' *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 2 (1858): 60–70. Francis Galton, 'Recent Discoveries in Australia.' *Cornhill Magazine*, 5 (1862): 354–364.

² Galton, *Memories*, 122; Oswell did not write of his expedition with Livingstone. His son William Edward Oswell wrote his biography, *William Cotton Oswell, Hunter and Explorer*, 2 Vols. (New York: Doubleday, Page 1900) for which Galton wrote an introduction. Galton noted that Oswell was already an experienced African traveller when he met Livingstone and that Livingstone relied heavily on his expertise.

³ David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858), 75.

Both William Cornwallis Harris (1807–48) and Roualeyn George Gordon-Cumming (1820–66) had, from boyhood, shared with Galton the love of travel which in all cases was to make their fame. All produced stirring accounts of their African adventures which fired the Victorian imagination and whet the appetite for more reports. Harris, particularly, was a superb wild-life artist deftly making his observations on the spot thereby giving his published accounts a vivacity other narratives lacked.



William Cornwallis Harris (1807–48)
Watercolour by Octavius Oakley, 1845



The Water Buck
Illustration by W.C. Harris from *Wild Sports of Southern Africa* (1839)

Livingstone's discovery, led Galton to approach his cousin Captain Douglas Galton with an idea: to follow Livingstone's footsteps and open up unexplored territory north of Lake Ngami.⁴ He did not know that Oswell and Livingstone had just turned their attention to this region.⁵ Ultimately circumstances would force him to take a different course.⁶ In the meantime Captain Galton suggested that he contact the RGS and once again connections smoothed the way. A Cambridge friend Robert Dalyell was acquainted with RGS vice-president Roderick Murcheson and was willing to provide an introduction; and Douglas Galton and Charles Darwin were Fellows. They put Francis up for membership and he

⁴ Sir Douglas Strutt Galton (1822–99), engineer noted for his work in military and hospital sanitation for which he was knighted in 1887.

⁵ Forrest, *Victorian Genius*, 38.

⁶ *Ibid.*

was elected on 14 January 1850.⁷ As one scholar put it, the RGS ‘was probably pleased with its new Fellow, who was healthy, clever, rich and independent.’⁸ And, it didn’t hurt that Galton belonged to the social class from which most of the learned societies of the time recruited their governing bodies.⁹ Socially they were ‘rather a “closed shop” to be penetrated only by exceptional characters ... who had distinguished themselves in the field — like [David] Livingstone for instance.’¹⁰

Galton considered the RGS ‘indispensable’ to a traveller like himself, providing him with the support to ‘undertake work that [was] authoritatively judged to be valuable.’¹¹ His new status gave renewed impetus to ‘vague plans’ which ‘were now carefully discussed, made more definite, and approved.’¹² He also now obtained introductions to individuals who could prove ‘useful to me in their respective ways,’ such as the Colonial Secretary, Lord Grey, who in turn could give ‘instructions in my favour to the Governor of the Cape.’¹³

First there were practical matters to attend to. His ‘outfit was procured,’ and it was also suggested by Sir Hyde Parker ‘whose acquaintance he had first made when shooting at Culrain [Scotland],’ that he take a companion.¹⁴ The man Parker had in mind was a twenty-three-year-old Anglo-Swedish naturalist and adventurer called Charles John Andersson (1827–67).¹⁵ Fond of travel, Andersson had from his earliest youth daydreamed of wild Africa. He also wished to render himself useful to his generation and

⁷ Pearson, *Life*, 1: 214, 215; Galton, *Memories*, 122; Gillham, *Life of Sir Francis Galton*, 62.

⁸ Middleton, Galton, ‘Travel and Geography,’ 46.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Galton, *Memories*, 123.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.* Henry George Grey (1802–94), Colonial Secretary, 1846 to 1852, influential in determining progress toward representative government in Australia and New Zealand.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; Sir Hyde Parker (1784?–1854), senior naval lord in the Earl of Derby’s first (1852) ministry at a time when the navy was undergoing transition from sail to steam.

¹⁵ Andersson was born in Värmland, Sweden, the illegitimate son of the English sportsman Llewellyn Lloyd (1792–1876) and Lloyd’s Swedish servant Kajsa Anderadotter. Wrote *The Field Sports of the North of Europe*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830); *Scandinavian Adventures*. 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1854); See J. P. R. Wallis, *Fortune my Foe: The Story of Charles John Andersson, African Explorer 1827–1867*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936).

‘earnestly longed to explore some portion of that continent where all my predilections could be fully indulged, and where much still remained in obscurity which might advantageously be brought to light.’¹⁶

He had arrived in England loaded-up with natural history specimens that included ‘a live crate of capercailzie [wood-grouse], two bear cubs, and the skin of one of their parents’ which he hoped to sell in order to support his travels and, to use Galton’s words, ‘push his way to fortune as best he could.’¹⁷ Africa beckoned, but the ‘expense of such a journey, was’ for him ‘an insurmountable obstacle,’ and he had long given up on the idea and ‘turned [his] thoughts ... to Iceland.’¹⁸ His friendship with Parker and Parker’s with Galton solved this problem: ‘Upon finding that I, also, had an intention of travelling ... he proposed to me to give up my talked-of trip to the far north, and accompany him southward—promising ... to pay the whole of my expenses.’¹⁹ It was a generous offer one which awoke all his former ambition though he admitted, ‘he was not blind to the difficulties and dangers’ attending such an expedition.²⁰ ‘After some hesitation,’ he accepted Galton’s ‘tempting and liberal proposal,’ and serious preparation commenced; beginning with the procurement of an incredible assortment of goods ‘partly for barter, and partly for presents to barbarous chiefs.’²¹ This veritable ‘pedlars shop’ of items, included guns, beads, calico, and ‘a magnificent crown ... which I vowed to place on the head of the greatest ... potentate I should met with in Africa.’ Chosen, Galton later admitted, in ‘perfect ignorance’ of ‘what would be most acceptable presents ... among the people I should met with.’²²

¹⁶ Charles John Andersson, *Lake Ngami or Explorations and Discoveries during Four Years’ Wanderings in the Wilds of South Western Africa*. (New York: Dix, Edwards, 1857), 1–2.

¹⁷ Galton, *Memories*, 124.

¹⁸ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Galton, *Narrative*, 2.

On 5 April 1850 they departed Plymouth Harbour sailing on the *Dalhousie* ‘an old teak East Indiaman,’ that would take nearly eighty days to reach the Cape.²³ The *Dalhousie* also carried emigrants and Galton described these as starting out a ‘squalid, and starved-looking set,’ who benefited from the ‘six weeks of rest and good feeding,’ provided them on the voyage.²⁴ Galton and other ‘cabin passengers’ who ‘of course had the poop [deck] to themselves’ were initially disturbed by their presence. Nevertheless he ‘liked the crowding and the bustle of it amazingly’ observing with fascinated curiosity as the reviving individuals formed into cliques with each group occupying a designated space under the poop.²⁵ Andersson, who Galton described as ‘remarkably fit and agile,’ spent his time climbing the rigging and impressing the crew and Galton spent his studying the Bechauana language and learning to use a sextant.²⁶

The voyage was uneventful. At one time they were ‘carried by a gentle breeze past the lovely island of Madeira,’ only to be buffeted by adverse winds as far as the coast of South America; until at length, on the night of 23 June 1850 they sighted their destination and at noon on the following day ‘anchored safely in Table Bay.’²⁷ ‘How truly welcome to my eyes,’ Andersson recalled, ‘was the fine panoramic view of Cape Town, with the picturesque Table Mountain rising immediately in the background!’²⁸

²³ Galton, *Memories*, 125. *Dalhousie* later carried emigrants to Australia. On 19 October 1853 she sank in the English Channel, off Beechey Head, with the loss of over fifty passengers. Andersson notes the tragedy in *Lake Ngami*.

²⁴ Galton, *Narrative*, 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.



Table Bay with Table Mountain
in the Background.

Source: Mary Evans Picture Library

Lodged at Welsh's Hotel they intended staying only long enough to 'obtain information about our intended route' and procure any provisions that they might still require.²⁹ They presented their letter of introduction to Sir Harry Smith (1787–1860) governor of the Cape.³⁰ But Sir Harry had bad news, and it came as something of a 'bombshell.'³¹

Two weeks after arriving Galton had written his mother telling her all was well; that he was making new friends, and running into old acquaintances, like Sir Hyde Parker who was in port in command of a ship.³² Unfortunately he also informed her that four days after his arrival 'news had come from the frontier that emigrant Boers ... had broken out in open revolt' and had 'invested the whole of the inhabitable country north of the Orange River,' the direct way to Lake Ngami.³³ They were refusing passage to anyone

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Galton, *Memories*, 126. See *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith Baronet of Aliwal on the Sulej*, G. C. B. (London: John Murray, 1903); See also Joseph H. Lehmann, *Remember You Are and Englishman: A Biography of Harry Smith* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977).

³¹ Galton, *Memories*, Ibid.

³² Francis Galton to Violetta Galton, 8 July 1850, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 219.

³³ Galton, *Narrative*, 4; Severin, *The African Adventure*, 137. 'Boer,' farmer. The north-east migration, 1835–1840, known as The Great Trek, led to the creation of the Afrikaans speaking Boer Republics: The Transvaal and Orange Free State, further trouble with the British and the Boer Wars of 1880–81 and 1899–1902; See, Eric Anderson Walker, *The Great Trek*. 3rd edition (London: Adam & Charles, 1934); Johannes Meintjes, *The Voortrekkers: The Story of the Great Trek and the Making of South Africa* (London: Cassell, 1975); J. D. Fage and William Tordoff, *A History of South Africa*, 4th edition (London: Routledge, 2001).

reckless enough to enter territory they now claimed as their own in the first great mass-migration of Caucasians into Africa.³⁴ Harry Smith could not guarantee their safety. He strongly advised they take another route rather than following the Vaal River to Lake Ngami.³⁵

They were now ‘compelled to chose between the eastern and western coasts’ with neither presenting an easy prospect.³⁶ Galton first planned to sail up the east coast to the southern tip of Mozambique and travel inland using native porters for transport. This was rejected because carrying everything on men’s backs would have made it impossible for Andersson to carry the natural-history specimens he wished to acquire.³⁷ The east coast ‘was [also] infected by fevers fatal to Europeans.’³⁸ Unfortunately, the west coast was for a considerable distance ‘northwards nothing but a sandy shore, destitute of fresh water and vegetation.’³⁹ They were rescued from their indecision by a cattle-trader from Walfisch [Walvis] Bay an outpost on the west-coast seven-hundred miles [about 1126km] from the Cape.⁴⁰ He recommended the settlement as a suitable place to begin their journey; travelling along the coast, then proceeding inland by wagon, an idea supported by German missionaries whose acquaintance Galton had made in Cape Town. Walfisch Bay, they agreed, ‘was of all places most favourably situated for a an excursion into the interior, and there were missionary establishments already formed from near the coast to many days’ journey inwards.’⁴¹ Beyond this lay territory ‘into which no white man had ever penetrated,’ and this thrillingly was their goal.⁴²

³⁴ Galton, *Narrative*, 4; Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 11; J. D. Omer-Cooper, ‘Southern and Central Africa,’ in *The Making of Modern Africa: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. A. E. Afigbo and others. (London: Longman, 1986), 211–300.

³⁵ Galton, *ibid.*

³⁶ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 11.

³⁷ Galton, *Narrative*, 5.

³⁸ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 11.

³⁹ Andersson, *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Dutch and Afrikaans, *Walvisbaai*, German *Walfischbucht* or *Walfishbai* all meaning Whale Bay or Bay of Whales. Galton’s spelling is retained.

⁴¹ Galton, *Narrative*, 5. John H. Wellington, *South West Africa and its Human Issues* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 158, 159. The ecumenical Rhenish Missionary Society (est. 1799) became culturally and politically influential in SWA. See Horton Davies and R. H. W. Shepperd, *South African Missions, 1800–1950* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1954).

⁴² Galton, *ibid.*

Getting there was another matter, as ‘vessels only frequented Walfisch Bay once or twice every two years.’⁴³ So Galton chartered a small schooner, the *Foam*, with part of the expense born by the missionaries who wished to provision their outlying stations and ‘obtain passage ... for the Rev. Mr [Heinrich] Schöneberg, who was on a mission of peace and good-will into Damara-land.’⁴⁴ Harry Smith had something similar in mind for Galton: ‘I was also requested ... to establish if possible, friendly relations on the part of the Colonial government with such tribes as were liable to be exposed to the attack of the emigrant Boers, and to disavow strongly all sympathy on its part with them.’⁴⁵ To encourage this aim he was provided with a document ‘to express this and to serve as my credentials. It was written in English, Dutch, and Portuguese, with a huge seal appended to it, protected by a tin case.’⁴⁶

This was still a nameless land, with Walfisch Bay a recently established (1840) trading-post located on an estuary of the Kuisip River, about half way between the Gariep [Orange] River, on the southern border with Cape Colony and the Cunene River, on the northern border with the Portuguese territories.⁴⁷ It was in all directions an inhospitable place. Along the western sea-coast for nearly one-thousand miles stretched the Namib Desert: ‘a weird and waterless world battered by the cold Atlantic waves on one side, and stretching in stricken rejection for some sixty to a hundred miles inland on the other.’⁴⁸ Here grew strange plants, like the edible Nara, and the unique strap-leaved *Welwitschia mirabilis* that was sustained by the dew of the evening-mist and could achieve an amazing age of two-thousand years.⁴⁹ The Namib gave way to an escarpment rising two-

⁴³ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 12.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Galton, ‘Expedition into South-Western Africa,’ 141.

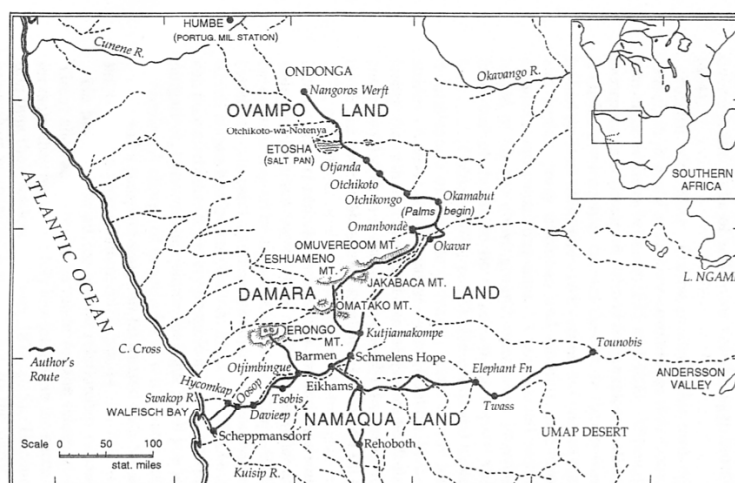
⁴⁶ Galton, *Memories*, 128.

⁴⁷ Olga Levinson, *The Ageless Land: The Story of South West Africa* (Cape Town: Tafelberg-Uitgewers, 1961), 15.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁹ Nara melon is an arid-zone edible gourd, eaten by both people and animals. *Welwitschia mirabilis* was named in 1860 for the botanist Friedrich Welwitsch (1806–72) who discovered it in 1859. It is the only plant in its species and is limited to SWA. Charles Darwin and Sir Joseph Hooker (1817–1911) both took an interest in the plant. It features on the Namibian Coat of Arms.

thousand metres where it met a grassy plateau, gradually sloping down to another desert, the Kalihari. In the north the country was called Ovamboland; the centre Damaraland (or Hereroland) and the south Namaqualand (Namaland). All named for the tribes living there.⁵⁰



Map of Ovampo Land
(The dotted river beds indicate temporary torrents occurring some years only during the height of the season.
At other times they are dry and sandy.)

Map showing Galton's journeys in South West Africa, 1850–52.

Source: F. Galton, *Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa* (1889)

Galton wandered Cape Town to find out more about the country ahead. Walfisch Bay sounded unpromising. There was scant water and the nearest place cattle could thrive was at a mission called Scheppmannsdorf almost thirty miles from the coast. 'Thence a journey of ten or twelve days ... led to two other stations ... and all beyond them northwards was unknown.'⁵¹

Nothing could be left to chance 'as nothing whatever but the oxen could be bought where the missionaries were.'⁵² All food, two Cape wagons, nine mules, two horses, a few dogs, extra wheels, axel-trees, were acquired.⁵³ Galton found a Portuguese 'headman' who

⁵⁰ Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa*, 1. From 1800 to 1884 the country was inhabited by independent tribes, each under the leadership of a chief or 'Kaptein.'

⁵¹ Galton, *Narrative*, 6.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Galton, *Narrative*, 9.

spoke English and Dutch, Timboo a black muleteer, and a boy to help him, two wagon drivers, and two leaders for the oxen. That was seven ‘servants’ plus Andersson and himself.⁵⁴

They departed 7 August 1850 and on the eve of 20 August 1850 they rounded Pelican point sailing into a wide bay ‘the shores of which were dancing with mirage.’⁵⁵ As well as the eponymous pelicans there were flocks of sea-birds overhead and flamingos in the shallows. Along the way they had seen the ‘great many whales of a sort called “humpbacks,”’ for which Walfisch Bay had been named: ‘a magnificent sight.’⁵⁶ Otherwise all seemed desolate save for a small store-house just visible through the haze.

In the morning the building came into view and at midday they disembarked. Seven natives came to meet them. They were Nama men, some in trousers others in animal skins. They were animated and voluble, speaking in their distinctive language with its clicks. Three carried guns. They ‘drew up in a line, and looked as powerful as they could; and the men with guns professed to load them.’⁵⁷ The display of bravado was answered by a willingness to parley on the part of the visitors. ‘They were well enough acquainted with sailors and the advent of a ship was of course a great godsend for them, as they bartered, for tobacco, clothes, and all sorts of luxuries, the goats’ milk and oxen which a few of them had; but they had been savagely ill-used more than once.’⁵⁸ But on the appearance of their leader an amicable exchange took place with ‘signs and smiles taking the place of language,’ and they found themselves being guided to a place, where water

⁵⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 10. Most English travellers regarded indigenous languages negatively. See, Robert Needham Cust, *A Sketch of the Modern Languages of Africa* (London: Trübner, 1883. 2 vols.; reprint, London: Routledge, 2001), 435, 436. See also Nicolas Wade, ‘How an ancient click clique started our mother tongue,’ *The Age*, 19 March 2003; available at <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/03/18/1047749768823.html> (accessed 20 April 2009); Hartmut Traunmüller, ‘Clicks and the idea of a human protolanguage,’ *Phonum* 9 (2003): 1–4; available at <http://www.ling.umu.se/fonetik2003/pdf/001.pdf> (accessed 20 April 2009). See note 79 below.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

might be found, called Sand Fountain.⁵⁹ They also organised a courier to run twenty-five miles to Scheppmansdorf to deliver a letter to the missionary Mr Bam.⁶⁰

It was August, and the land swirled and burned with shimmering intensity. Galton had imagined Sand Fountain as a ‘bubbly streamlet’ but the Kuisip was a *periodical* river running only once in four or five years.⁶¹ It turned out to be ‘a hole, six inches across, of green stagnant water ... execrable to taste ... almost putrid, and highly saline.’ With some digging enough water could be obtained to supply the animals. And using a ‘copper distiller’ they were able to render the water fit enough for cooking and very strong coffee and tea.⁶²

During the evening Mr Bam arrived together with Mr Stewartson, a cattle-trader, recently arrived from Cape Town. They had received the letter and made a five-hour journey astride oxen. Galton never believed these animals could be used for riding ‘except possibly as a joke; but here were two fine-looking beasts, saddled, and with sticks through their noses, and a thin bridle fastened to a stick, and tied to a log of wood, and really they looked uncommonly well, and not at all out of their element.’⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Established by Heinrich Scheppmann (1818–47) in 1846.

⁶¹ Ibid., 10, 11. Emphasis in original.

⁶² Ibid., 11.

⁶³ Galton, *Narrative*, 12.



NAMAQUA HUNTERS, WALVISCH BAY.

Namaqua Hunters, Walvisch Bay by Thomas Baines.

Namaqua riding oxen 'horse-style' showing the characteristic bridle and bit, European cast-off clothing and the custom of carrying a weapon in a gun-bag.

Wood engraving by G. Pearson from original sketches.

Source: T. Baines, *Explorations in South West Africa* (1864)

Bam and Stewartson helped them disembark. On 27 August four days after arriving the *Foam* returned to Cape Town carrying with it a letter to his mother telling her that he had made a fortunate selection of men nearly all of whom knew some kind of trade. And, he was sure that he had chosen a far better route than his first for now he was already much closer to his destination. The country was 'infested with lions' so he was sure to get some 'delightful shooting.'⁶⁴

But Bam was sceptical about their planned trip. Born at the Cape 'he ... spoke much of the difficulty of travelling here ... and did not hold out to me the slightest encouragement as regarded my journey;' Galton would find it very difficult go 'up the country' without a guide. He could not send any 'Hottentot' [Nama] because he did not have an interpreter for them and they were afraid of the Damaras; but Stewartson was going in two months and was willing to show them the way.⁶⁵ Word soon arrived from Bam that 'a lion had come over from the Swakop River, and was prowling about, and that a hunt should be got up at once.'⁶⁶ Galton left Andersson to complete preparations and followed Bam to the

⁶⁴ Francis Galton to Violetta Galton, 27 August, 1850, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 221, 222.

⁶⁵ Galton, *Narrative*, 12, 15. 'Hottentot,' a term used in older texts derives from the Dutch word for stutter, *stotteren*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

Mission. Hunting was after all one of the reasons he had come to Africa and this chance could not be allowed to pass. Galton learned that this lion was something of a local celebrity; a well-known beast who had ‘killed an immense number of cattle as well as fifty oxen, three horses, one donkey, and innumerable dogs.’⁶⁷ It prowled at night unsettling the people of Scheppmansdorf, a little island of faith in a hostile land. The cat had taken Stewartson’s small dog which had ‘incautiously approached ... and paid the penalty of its life for its daring.’⁶⁸ Following this calamity it was destined to be hunted down. And so it was that Galton joined Bam and Stewartson on a lion hunt.

For a good part of the next day they tracked the animal through dunes; but his action was so ‘steady, so smooth, so entirely devoid of hurry,’ that Galton could well ‘understand how a person might be seized through miscalculating the speed of his advance.’⁶⁹ Disappointed, they returned to the mission and resumed the hunt the following day; and with every native pressed into service, they eventually encountered the lion. This time Galton did not hesitate and pulling his rifle into position, took aim. Perhaps nervous, he miscalculated and the bullet lodged messily in the animal’s rump. It was seriously wounded. In a ‘tearing passion,’ it made for the nearest bush where it fell, and where Mr Bam dispatched it with a single bullet to the head. ‘He was a huge, gaunt beast, miserably thin,’ and when they opened him up they found Stewartson’s dog inside; in five barely-digested pieces. The lion was soon skinned; the skin ‘dressed’ and Galton had his trophy.⁷⁰

Located on an island in the middle of the Kuisip the mission comprised a whitewashed church and the dwellings of the Bams, Stewartsons and their Nama flock. Mr Bam was architect, smith, wheelwright, and gardener, and Mrs Bam acted as nurse, cook, and washerwoman.⁷¹ They kept a small garden on a little stream amid acacia trees.⁷² Behind

⁶⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁶⁸ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 19.

⁶⁹ Galton, *Narrative*, 19.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 20, 21.

⁷¹ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 23.

⁷² Galton, *Narrative*, 18.

rose enormous sand-hills where Galton made his first serious attempt at mapping.⁷³ And here the missionary ‘made every effort to civilise and christianise his small flock.’⁷⁴ Galton observed, ‘the natives would crowd the church and sing hymns, which, being about three-quarters articulate and one-quarter clicks, produce[d] a very funny effect.’⁷⁵

On 19 September 1850 the expedition set out for the next Mission, situated on the Swakop River about one-hundred miles in a north-east direction at Otjimbinguè. They travelled part of the way in the cool of the night and ‘off-packed and out-spanned at eleven o’clock to drink coffee and to sleep.’⁷⁶ Before daylight they set off again and in the morning descended 1.000 feet [3048 metres] into a deep gorge which the river had made for itself amid high reeds and clumps of Camel Thorn trees. Galton regarded this juncture of his adventure as ‘the *premier pas* of his journey.’⁷⁷ Here they rested.

Pack Oxen.	Load carried.	Gross Weight.	In Cart drawn by 8 Males.
Ceylon	Canvass Bag, No. 1.— Peas, 45 lbs. } Sugar, 48 " }	97	Common guns . . . 112 Barrel full of presents . 66 6 pots and 2 kettles . 110 Assagai 56 Hatchets and spear- heads 25
Stewartson's Ox.	Canvass Bag, No. 2.— Rice, 42 lbs. } Coffee, 42 " } Spelter, 25 " }	110	Fore and after chests, containing small things, knives, to- bacco, tinder-boxes, flints, choppers, and also calico and dresses 196 Biscuits 53 Tools 23 4 shooting guns (we carried the others) . 36 Clothes, books, and per- sonal effects of An- dersonson and myself . 120 Astronomical instru- ments, &c. 50 Natural history instru- ments 42
Black Ox.	Skin Bag, No. 1.— Spelter, 75 lbs. } Dresses, &c. }	185	Men's sleeping things and clothes, about 30 lbs. per man . . . 210 — 1089
Red Ox.	Skin Bag, No. 2.— Bullets, } Moleskin Clothes, } 2 Bars lead, } Shot, Powder, }	130	
Mule	Tent, 40 lbs. } Water, 20 " } &c. }	90	

Everything was weighed with a steelyard that I had taken.

Pack oxen taken to Otjimbinguè

Source: F. Galton, *Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa* (1889)

⁷³ Galton, *Narrative*, 12, 13.

⁷⁴ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 20.

⁷⁵ Galton, *Narrative*, 18. The ‘click consonant’ considered ‘so striking to the ear that the earliest explorers and missionaries to this area frequently commented on the very distinctive acoustic quality of local languages.’ Robert K. Herbert, ‘The socio-history of clicks in Southern Bantu.’ In Rajend Mesthrie, ed. *Language in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 297. See note 58.

⁷⁶ Galton, *Narrative*, 25.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Next morning, travelling inland along ridges parallel to the river, they became aware that the climate was changing. The sun was now beating down and cooling breezes had disappeared. It was ‘157° Fahrenheit [69° Celsius] in the sun at midday which ‘appeared quite incredible.’ But having made a reading using ‘7 thermometers of 5 different makers,’ Galton found that ‘they all agree[d].’⁷⁸

Some of the men became separated from the group; eventually tuning up in the evening without their animals at a camp the others had set up on the plain above the river. That same evening Stewartson persuaded Galton to let the remaining mules and horses graze overnight in the river, and ‘seeing no tracks of lions about, we did so without fear.’

What was our horror the next morning on going down—when we saw, not a mule or a horse, but their tracks going full gallop in a drove, and by their side, the tracks of six lions, full chase. A little further on my pet mule lay dead, and a lion eating it; by the side a wolf waiting for his turn, and a little further my biggest horse just killed and nothing more to be seen.⁷⁹

At the end of September they reached Otjimbinguè, where Johannes Rath was missionary; staying until December 1850.⁸⁰ Here Galton met Swede Hans Larsen and Englishman John Allen; both former sailors. Larsen had an impressive reputation as a big-game hunter and Bam recommended him as the best person to guide Galton into Damaraland.⁸¹ Larson and Andersson were now charged with bringing up new oxen and wagons from Walfisch Bay. In the mean time Galton set up camp at Otjimbinguè.

In the next chapter Galton is exposed to the horrors of internecine warfare and meets the man who is the key to his further movement into Damaraland. Local politics and the tribal wars that had riven the land from long before Galton’s arrival threaten to

⁷⁸ Francis Galton to Violetta Galton, December 1850, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 222.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Established by Hugo Hahn, Franz Kleinschmidt (1812–64) and Johannes Bam in 1844. Rath (1816–1903) was at Otjimbinguè from 1849 till 1861.

⁸¹ ‘A fine specimen of the true Northman—fair complexion, light hair, blue eyes ... muscular and powerfully built ... but being of a very quiet disposition.’ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 44, 45; Galton, *Memories*, 134, 135; Galton, *Narrative*, 50.

undermine his expedition. This situation allows Galton to exercise the authority which Harry Smith had given him to act on both his own, and Britain's behalf. It was confirmation of the confidence held in him by the administration at the Cape and indirectly, by the elite 'closed shop' of men at the RGS who saw in him great promise of accomplishment.

6 Travelling on

In the final chapter Galton, now twenty-nine and ‘fresh from his fallow years,’ meets and successfully engages a local leader with the power to derail his plans for further travel into Africa. With anxiety, awe and still-boyish curiosity, he employs the sextant he first learned to use onboard *Dalhousie*, to make a foray into anthropometric measurement; ‘bringing imagination to observation and irony to scientific seriousness,’ when he first encounters a ‘Hottentot Venus.’¹

Settled at a respectful distance from the mission-house Galton called on Mr Rath ‘to hear the news of the country.’² He was shocked by what he heard. Namaquas had robbed Damaras and destroyed the Schmelen’s Hope mission at Okahandja, forcing the missionary Mr Kolbe to flee to safety at Barmen.³ The details were awful: the Namaquas had mutilated the Damara and stolen about twenty-five thousand head of cattle.⁴ The perpetrator was ‘a lawless ruffian’ called Jonker Afrikaner, an Orlam Namaqua tribal-leader who had begun his marauding career in the 1830s.

Taking Larsen, Stewartson and two Damara interpreters, Galton set off for Barmen the ‘head seat of intelligence’ as far as Damara and Namaqua movements were concerned.⁵ There they found the Kolbes and heard of the murder of their Damara neighbours. They also saw ‘two poor women, one with both legs cut off at her ankle joints, and the other with one.’ The Namaquas had done this in order to pull off the solid iron bracelets they wore; the women had then crawled twenty-miles from Schmelen’s Hope to Barmen.⁶

The Orlam were descendents of indigenous women and their Dutch overseers. They spoke Cape-Dutch, wore European clothes, were baptised, monogamous and skilled with

¹ Fabian, *Hindsight*, 46.

² Francis Galton, ‘Recent Expedition into the Interior of South-Western Africa.’ *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 22 (1852): 140–163.

³ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁴ Francis Galton to Violetta Galton, December, 1850, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 224.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 225; Galton, *Narrative*, 38; Galton, ‘Recent Expedition,’ 142.

⁶ Galton, *Narrative*, 40, 41.

oxen and guns. During the early nineteenth-century they had begun migrating from central Cape Colony toward the banks of the Orange River into land where nomadic Damara (Herero) grazed their cattle. Trouble ensued. ‘Both Namas and Hereros did their utmost to exterminate each other, committing many brutalities.’⁷ By the 1830s ‘large numbers of Nama, were clustering round five or six families, each of whom opened up regular trade routes, claimed specific territories and attached a missionary to their headquarters,’ making each mission a *de facto* military outpost.⁸

Jonker Afrikaner (1785–1861) whose homestead was strategically placed at Eikhams (Windhoek) had, between 1842 and 1844, built the ‘Bay Road’ leading from Windhoek to Walfisch Bay; a route he fiercely defended.⁹ Visitors posed a threat. Equally, Damara ‘believed, with ... reason, that every individual of a light complexion was leagued against them.’¹⁰ They knew their cattle were sold to Europeans who passed safely through Namaqualand; strengthening their conviction ‘that we were enemies in disguise.’ Galton, afraid that his expedition would be ruined, set out to convince them of his ‘real motivation.’ Galton dispatched letters to Jonker and the Damara chiefs.¹¹

⁷ Early Afrikaans. Alvin Kienetz, ‘The Key Role of the Orlam Migrations in the Early Europeanization of South-West Africa.’ *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 10, 4 (1977): 553–72; Brigitte Lau, ‘Conflict and Power in Nineteenth-Century Namibia.’ *Journal of African History*, 27 (1986): 29–39; Levinson, *The Ageless Land*, 56; Forrest, *Victorian Genius*, 44; Wellington, *South West Africa*, 151–153; F. N. Kolbe, ‘An Account of the Damara Country.’ *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* 3 (1854): 1–3. *See also*, Carl Hugo Linsingen Hahn, Heinrich Vedder and Louis Fourie, *The Native Tribes of South West Africa* (Cape Town: Cape Times, 1928).

⁸ Lau, ‘Conflict and Power,’ 32.

⁹ Klaus Dierks, *Namibian Roads in History: From the 13th Century till Today*, available at http://www.klausdierks.com/Namibian_Roads/index.html (accessed 12 April 2009); Vedder, ‘The Nama,’ 119.

¹⁰ Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, 79.

¹¹ *Ibid.*



JONKER AFRIKANER.

Jonker Afrikaner

Source: C. J. Andersson, *Lake Ngami* (1857)

Born at the Cape Jonker was, technically, a British subject; one who still had some respect for British authority. This gave Galton leverage. When Jonker's reply did not come he decided to go to Barmen where, coincidentally, Jonker's reply had just arrived.¹² It begged Galton come and talk. Galton reiterated his position: his intentions were honourable, and he would not allow Jonker to jeopardise his plans.¹³ Another letter sent, again he waited. In the meantime he socialised with Hugo Hahn (1818–95) and heard of a lake called Omanbondè where a nation called the Ovampo [Ovambo] were said to live, 'a very interesting agricultural people, who according to Damara ideas were highly civilized.'¹⁴ He could find out nothing more, so he bided his time, devoting his energy to a very interesting line of research.

Mr Hahn was head of a large household. One member of the community was Mrs Petrus wife of an interpreter. Her figure with its pronounced buttocks (steatopygia) drew

¹² Galton, *Narrative*, 50, 51.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

Galton's attention. Describing her as a 'Venus among Hottentots,' he was determined, discretely, to record her dimensions.¹⁵ 'I profess to be a scientific man,' he later wrote, 'and was exceedingly anxious to obtain accurate measurements of her shape,' but not speaking the language could not have 'explained to the lady what my foot-rule would be.' He was reluctant to ask the missionary to interpret. Then gazing at her form, he got an idea. Which was to use his sextant to take her measurements from a distance from where she stood under a tree.

I took a series of observations upon her figure in every direction, up and down, crossways, diagonally, and so forth, and I registered them carefully upon an outline drawing for fear of any mistake; this being done I boldly pulled out my measuring-tape, and measured the distance from where I was to the place she stood, and having thus obtained both base and angles, I worked the results by trigonometry and logarithms.¹⁶

With no word from Jonker, on 10 December 1851 he returned to Otjimbinguè where he decided to take radical action: to visit Jonker Afrikaner—a man so powerful that the Herero called him Mukuru Uouje, God of the World—unannounced.¹⁷ He saddled his ride-ox 'Ceylon,' and wearing a pink riding-coat, and jackboots, rode three days until Jonker's place came into sight. Then, letting Ceylon 'get [his] wind' he 'rammed [his] spurs into the beast's ribs and shoved him along right into the captain's house, at least as far as his horns would let him go.'¹⁸ He then admonished the chief 'brandishing my paper with the big seal,' the whole performance astounding Jonker who was sitting on the floor smoking a pipe.¹⁹ Galton pressed his demands: to cease oppressing the Damaras and to keep the peace.²⁰ Smith's injunction bore a barely-veiled threat to Jonker's personal safety, leading him, reluctantly, to capitulate. A code of conduct was drawn up and

¹⁵ Ibid; See also Sandor L. Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature.' In H. L. Gates, ed. *Race, Writing and Difference* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 223–261; Rachel Holmes, *The Hottentot Venus: The Life and Death of Saartje Baartman: Born 1789–Buried 2002* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Levinson, *Ageless Land*, 62.

¹⁸ Francis Galton to W. F. Campbell, M.P., 5 December, 1850, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 226.

¹⁹ Galton, *Memories*, 136;

²⁰ In Pearson, *Life*, 1: 227.

witnessed by all concerned.²¹ Galton also met the other chiefs; a meeting so successful that he found himself ‘an umpire in their own disputes.’²² And when news of his *rapprochement* with Jonker spread among the settlements, he soon found himself a minor hero among the beleaguered Damara. Importantly, the arrangement would be ‘in force along 250 miles of frontier,’ and he would now have no difficulty travelling.²³

²¹ Both reproduced in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 127–129, 227.

²² Galton to Campbell, in Pearson, *Life*, 1: 226.

²³ *Ibid.*, 226.

CONCLUSION

Francis Galton made a successful journey into Ovamboland and returned to Walfisch Bay in December 1851, arriving in England on 5 April 1852.¹ Before leaving Africa he had sent the RGS the first part of a report of his expedition.² It was read to the Society on 23 February with the second part read on 26 April 1852. Their faith in him had not been misplaced, and in 1854 he was awarded one of their two annual gold medals ‘for having at his own cost and in furtherance of the expressed desire of the Society, fitted out an expedition to explore the centre of South Africa.’ For having described the unknown countries of the Namaquas, Damaras and Ovambos; and for having made accurate astronomical observations determining latitude and longitude at all places through which he had travelled.³ The medal gave him public acclaim and an established position in the scientific world. Importantly it resulted in a dinner party where he met his future wife.

This event occurring beyond the time-frame of this thesis may be its most important event. For the argument presented in the previous chapters takes the point of view of Gilmore and Tosh, that achieving adult manhood was not a natural process. It was, rather, a process requiring public demonstration of qualities and attributes the acquisition of which could be ‘read’ by other men, and society as a whole. Marriage was a potent demonstration of this. Those, like Galton, who respected convention, did not delay: ‘Without marriage, neither formal majority at 21 nor material self-sufficiency was enough to confer a fully fledged masculine status.’⁴ As Gilmore observes, the ‘manhood ideal is not purely psychogenetic in origin but is also a culturally imposed ideal to which men must conform whether or not they find it psychologically congenial ... it is not simply a reflection of individual psychology but a part of public culture, a collective representation.’⁵ Galton followed others mentioned in this thesis on this path to

¹ Successful in that he and made the journey without mishap. He met King Nangoro (1790–1857) but mutual misunderstanding, and Galton’s refusal of the king’s niece as a ‘temporary wife,’ stymied communication and forced an early departure.

² Galton, ‘Recent Expedition into the Interior of South-Western Africa.’

³ Galton, *Memories*, 150.

⁴ Tosh, *A Mans Place*, 110.

⁵ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 4, 5.

social validation: Mansfield Parkyns, experienced a restless youth and ultimately conformed to social expectation; having left and then returned to home and marriage.

The difficulty of the task should not be underestimated. Neither inherited wealth or genius in a particular sphere, whether in sport or mathematics, was enough to ensure the desired steady progression from youth to manhood, as the example of the Myttons demonstrates. There were traps along the way; as Tertius Galton, who guided his son in all matters relating to his education and social development, was aware. A young man was guided into adulthood. In Galton's case at eighteen with Miller to Constantinople; at twenty-two, travelling the known 'tourist route,' to Egypt and taking responsibility for his own learning in Scotland; and finally at twenty-eight with Andersson, in unknown Africa a place where he could seriously test himself, mentally and physically, and put into practice all he had learned.

Francis' education was not dissimilar to that of other young men of his age and class. In many ways it was typical, since 'male coming of age focused upon the rituals of initiation, in school holidays and then back from university and the Grand Tour, into the sporting round of local society.'⁶

Though Pearson placed heredity at the heart of his description of Galton's progress, he also understood this was only part of the picture. He surmises that typical of adolescence there was 'much ferment and much change.'⁷ Galton began as an aimless 'well-to-do young man seeking travel-pleasure in the routine way, without scientific object.' Yet travelling itself became 'an art' that needed training; 'training in what to take and what to observe, training in how to meet and how to handle men.'⁸ And it was, ultimately, through travel he achieved his goal of full acceptance into the company of his adult male peers.

⁶ Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600–1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 144.

⁷ Pearson, *Life*, 1, 197.

⁸ *Ibid.*

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Appendix 1

Honours bestowed on Francis Galton

Gold Medal, Royal Geographic Society 1853

Silver Medal, French Geographical Society 1854

Elected to Athenæm Club 1855

Fellow of the Royal Society 1856

Gold Medal of the Royal Society 1886

DCL Oxford 1894

ScD (Hon) Cambridge 1895

Huxley Medal, Anthropological Institute 1901

Hon. Fellow Trinity College, Cambridge 1902

Darwin Medal, Royal Society 1902

Linnean Society Medal at Darwin-Wallace Celebration 1908

KCB 1909

Copley Medal, Royal Society 1910

Appendix 2

From South West Africa to Namibia

Andersson was the first to refer to the Transgariiep as South West Africa in his writings; and this term was retained with only a light alteration during the region's time as a German colony [1884–1915] when it was known as German South West Africa. Fage comments that 'The 1914–18 war, in which Britain, France, Belgium and South Africa conquered the German colonies, can be regarded as the last fling of the old imperialism in Africa.'¹ After the Great War the League of Nations mandated the territory to South Africa and following the Second World War it was brought under UN control. This action was vehemently disputed by South Africa, leading to a twenty year dispute: One factor in South Africa's refusal to accept a UN trusteeship agreement was undoubtedly the wish to protect the interests of the white minority; another was that the territory possessed appreciable mineral wealth, in diamonds ... In due course South African governments began to move to integrate South West Africa into their own republic and its system of *apartheid*, while the UN took steps to proclaim the illegality of the South African administration in South West Africa and to rename it Namibia. An important consequence of these developments was the emergence of a South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) as a full-blooded nationalist movement. Something like two-thirds of the indigenous population were Ovambo, so naturally they took a leading role.²

The name Namibia was adopted in 1968 with the former South West Africa becoming independent as The Republic of Namibia on 21 March 1990.

¹ Fage and Tordoff, *A History of Africa*, 417.

² *Ibid.*, 497, 498.

Appendix 3

Summary Biographies

On 26 July 1853 Charles John Andersson reached Lake Ngami from the west, having made T'ounobis his starting point. In 1858 after a stint as a mining manager he set off again; this time in search for the Cunene River. He failed in his endeavour but with great satisfaction discovered a new permanent river, the Okavango. He married in 1860 settling with his wife Sarah Jane (née Aitchison) at Otjimbinguè. He made a living droving cattle in Damaraland. In 1864 the always tetchy relationship between the Damara and Namaqua descended into outright war and Andersson, as head of the Otjimbinguè Volunteers, joined on the Damara side. Though the Nama were defeated Andersson sustained a serious leg wound and nearly died. Nursed by his wife in Cape Town he devoted time to writing a book on the birds of Damaraland illustrated by Thomas Baines. In 1866 he returned to Damaraland. However his partisan relationship with the Damara left him vulnerable to attack and pillage by vengeful Namaqua at Otjimbinguè so he moved north into Ovamboland hoping to open the way for European trade. He travelled with Axel Eriksson (1846–1901) a young Swede who had been apprenticed to Andersson under a three-year contract. All did not go well as Andersson was already suffering, possibly from bowel cancer, dysentery and malaria; and he died a terrible death from peritonitis sometime in early July 1867. Leaving Sara Jane, with four children all under six, a widow in Cape Town.¹

Hans Larsen and John Allen with Andersson's strong encouragement decided, in 1853, to seek their fortune on the goldfields of Australia. News of the 'mania' had spread to Cape Town and Andersson was of the opinion that they could either stay in Africa with him

¹ Wallis, *Fortune My Foe*, 384–397ff.; Andersson, *Lake Ngami*; Charles John Andersson, 'On South Africa.' *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 4, 2 (1859–1860): 63–66; Charles John Andersson, 'Explorations in South Africa from Walfisch Bay to Lake Ngami, and Ascent of the Tioge River.' *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 25 (1855): 79–107; Charles John Andersson, *The Okavango: A Narrative of Travel, Exploration, and Adventure*. New York: Harper, 1861; Klaus Dierks, Chronology of Namibian History, available online at <http://klausdierks.com> (accessed 19 September 2009).

and make a tolerable living or go to the ‘diggings’ and set themselves up for life. They departed early January 1853, and travelling as unassisted passengers aboard the *Vigilant*, arrived in Melbourne in February 1853. Though Galton speculates that Larsen may have met with mischance, what really happened to the adventurers is (presently) unknown.²

Jonker Afrikaner soon broke the Pax Galtoniana and in an effort to prevent an alliance between European missionaries and Herero leaders in Namaland was soon harassing the vulnerable again. After the attack made, in 1850, on the Kolbe’s mission at Okahandja he made enemies, not only among the Hereros, but among fellow Orlam and missionaries. Okahandja was the traditional headquarters of the Herero chiefs represented at this time by, perhaps the most renowned, Tjamuaha ua Tjirue (c1790–1861) styled Keeper of the Sacred Flame and his son and successor Maharero ua Tjamuaha (1820–90); and a subsequent attack on them at Okahandja in 1852 forced Tjamuaha into servile submission to Jonker, after which he was humiliatingly called ‘Jonker’s dog.’ By the 1860s Jonker had extended his powerful though murderous influence northward into Ovamboland, and its sea-board region the Kaokoveld, at a time when European interests were also extending into the area. The possibility of productive copper-mining providing a powerful incentive; with Jonker himself instrumental in the establishment of the first copper mines in 1850. Wanting to protect his power-base and maintain control of the country at any cost, in 1854, he moved forty-miles [60km] from his *werft* at Eikhams to Tjamuaha’s and Maharero’s settlement at Okahandja in order to be closer to their [cattle] riches and keep an eye on Rhenish missionary activity. Long periods of drought and later famine, together with Jonker’s ceaseless attacks, virtually destroyed the Hereros; such that at a missionary conference held at Otjimbinguè in 1856 the minutes recorded that the Herero nation had ceased to exist and only individuals with no connection to each other remained. The missionaries and administration at the Cape tried to intervene leading to increasing animosity between Jonker and the missions. Jonker died in August, and Tjamuaha in December 1861. They were succeeded by their sons Christian and Maharero who continued the warfare. And it was at the battle of Otjimbinguè, on 15 June 1863, that

² Andersson, *Lake Ngami*, Galton, *Memories*, 149; PROV VPRS 7667 Inward Overseas Passenger Lists (Foreign Ports) 1852–1923.

Christian Afrikaner was killed. He was succeeded by Jonker's nephew Jan Jonker Afrikaner (1820–89).³

³ Levinson, *Ageless Land*, 29–65; Wellington, *South West Africa*, 153, 154, 155; Vedder, 'The Nama,' 119, 120, 121; Vedder, 'The Herero,' 157, 158, 159, in Hahn, Vedder and Fourie, *The Native Tribes of South West Africa*; M. E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa*, 2nd edition (London: Longman), 53; Klaus Dierks, Chronology, available online at <http://klausdierks.com> (accessed 19 September 2009).



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