

## CHAPTER VI

FALLOW YEARS, 1844—1849

ON October 23rd, 1844, Tertius Galton had died. Francis Galton returned to town and took rooms at 105 Park Street in association with W. F. Gibbs, who afterwards became tutor to Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales, and with H. Vaughan Johnson, who had lived on the same staircase with Galton at Trinity, a man whom Galton describes as singularly attractive and with quaint turns of thought. But we have no letters of these years to guide us; the letters to his father of course ceased; the letters to his mother and sisters have perished, and even the letters of his sisters to him, which would have given clues to what Galton was thinking and doing—letters which Galton included in an index to his papers made late in life—have been destroyed before his papers reached the hands of his biographer. We have no evidence of what this young man of twenty-three, with ample means and intensely vigorous mind and body, was either doing or thinking, reading or observing. Yet we can be certain that in these fallow years, when nothing was published, nothing even written that has remained, there was much ferment and much change. Francis ceased any longer to be “little Francis,” the controlled of older brothers and sisters. His desertion of medicine, a profession, hereditary on the maternal side and ardently desired for him by his father,—his gradual change from orthodoxy towards agnosticism, were probably disapproved by his family; his brothers and sisters were settling down to their own individual lives and in more than one case their ideals were not his ideals. As Galton himself expresses it: “I was therefore free, and I eagerly desired a complete change; besides I had many ‘wild oats’ yet to sow<sup>1</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> *Memories of my Life*, p. 85.

Not a single letter is available, not a record of the winter 1844—5 in Park Lane ; but in the later part of 1845, the Red Gods' call reached Galton, the spring-fret was on him<sup>1</sup> :

Velvet-footed, who shall guide them to their goal?

Unto each the voice and vision : unto each his spoor and sign—

Lonely mountain in the Northland, misty sweat-bath 'neath the Line—

And to each a man that knows his naked soul!

*Let him go—go—go away from here!*

*On the other side the worlds he's overdue.*

*'Send your road is clear before you when the old*

*Spring-fret comes o'er you*

*And the Red Gods call for you!*

The Red Gods called, but for Galton the road was not clear before him, not for another five years did he know his soul! Galton's visits to Egypt and later to Syria were aimless, they were the restless visits of the well-to-do young man, seeking travel-pleasure in the routine way, without scientific object and without archaeological or linguistic knowledge. Yet there were epochs in them—as the meeting with Arnaud and the death of the faithful Ali—which influenced Galton permanently. Above all he gained two experiences—first that mere travel without aim does not give the highest pleasure, and secondly that travelling is itself an art and needs training—training in what to take and what to observe, training in how to meet and how to handle men. Think only of the Galton, the boy of 23 years, who set off to Khartoum without a map and without purpose, and who in Syria wished to sail down the Jordan on a raft based on inflated waterskins without thought of current or season of the year—think of these things, and then of the cautious preparation, the thought-out purpose of the African journey of six years later by one who after six fallow years had become a man in bearing and in power of achievement!

The young medical student of the Birmingham General Hospital and the freshman at Cambridge impress us with the power of observation and the capacity for action. The last year at Cambridge, the year in Egypt and Syria, the years to come of social life, hunting and shooting, bring before us another aspect of a many-sided nature, which had under the influence of the “spring-fret” to test many things before it knew its “naked soul.” As Galton himself has said, there were

<sup>1</sup> Rudyard Kipling: “The Feet of the Young Men” in *The Five Nations*.

“many wild oats yet to sow.” Yet in the sowing of them a transformation took place from the pleasure-seeking boy of unformed character controlled by any of many inherited tendencies, to the purposeful man seeking to extend human knowledge and with a character moulded firmly to opinions, which changed relatively little during the remainder of life. How sad it seems that all power of tracing the transformation of these fallow years has perished with the letters from and to him of this period!

The account Francis Galton has provided in his *Memories of the* travel in Egypt and Syria was written in 1908. It is more elaborated than the few simple notes he put together in 1885, twenty-three years earlier, of the same journeyings. In Chapter VI of the *Memories* Galton gives no date to his departure for Egypt. In the account of 1885, he states that he “started for the East in September (I think) 1845.” But there is in existence a playful letter from his friend Henry Hallam, dated Wraxall Lodge, Thursday, October 3rd, without year. The contents of this letter seem to indicate that Galton had asked Hallam to accompany him to Egypt, and if this be so, Galton did not start till somewhere near the anniversary of his father’s death<sup>1</sup>, and thus we have lost the record of one whole year of his life. The letter from Hallam runs:

MY DEAR GALTON,—I have been deliberating since I received your letter on the desirability of joining you, and though finally overcome by the prospect of minor and highly conventional difficulties relating to degrees and other matters equally contemptible, I envy you exceedingly. The pleasure of shooting at so large a mark as a hippopotamus of respectable size is peculiarly attractive to the mind of the infant sportsman, who like myself has been vainly endeavouring to rid creation of an orthodox number of partridges during the last month. I trust, however, that the terror of my arms is beginning to be spread in the neighbourhood, as I have been given to understand that a number of highly respectable pheasants, the fathers of families whose custom it has been for many years to insure their lives on the first of October have this year been either totally refused or accepted only on the payment of such an extravagant sum by their respective offices as must obviously have reference to the introduction of some new element into the sporting world to which it would be indelicate in me to refer more closely. Still, as I said, I gasp after the blood of Pachydermata, and under proper encouragement would direct my artillery with great hope of success against any inoffensive animal of large size, and easily vulnerable whom I might find sitting on the banks of the Nile.

<sup>1</sup> It may be doubted whether the legal business of winding up an estate like that of Tertius Galton could be completed much under a year.

Duty, however, calls on me to be serious. It is incumbent on me to point out the vast moral responsibility you incur, to warn you of the irretrievable disgrace in which all your friends will hold you, if when you are fairly committed to the pellucid streams and bracing atmosphere of an Egyptian river you stop short of penetrating to the Court of the Negus and reposing for awhile under the shadow of the Asylum of the Universe. If you will follow my advice you will go right ahead till you reach the Mountains of the Moon, then taking the first turning to the right continue your course until you find it necessary to ask your way; by which means you may immortalise yourself by the discovery of the great Central Sea, and by which time I hope to be able to join you there or anywhere else.

As you are anxious to have your dignity supported at foreign courts you may rely on a handsome case of brickbats with "Robert Peel" or "By Her Majesty's command," "From the East India Company, private" etc., addressed to you at every large town, postage of course not paid. Are you going before the end of next week? On Friday the 10th or Monday the 13th at latest I shall make my transit over the London disk, and will attempt to find you, if possible. I am sorry you never came into this part of the country as we should have been delighted by a visit. I am grown tremendously agricultural, and intend to come out strongly on the Potato disease next term. Yours most sincerely, H. T. HALLAM.

One wonders how the Egyptian and Syrian journeys would have worked out had Galton had Henry Hallam for his comrade. As it was Galton started alone. In the following memorandum we see how forty years later he described the events of those days:

EGYPT, SOUDAN AND SYRIA

1845—6

F. GALTON

written from memory 1885.

After my Father's death, October 1844, finding I had a competent fortune and hating the idea of practising medicine, also being disheartened by the sense that the medical knowledge to which I had access was very lax and that its progress seemed barred—I don't do justice I know to the state of the case, but only describe my feelings fresh from the rigorous methods of proof at Cambridge—that I determined to give it up. My passion was for movement and travel and I ultimately started for the East in September (I think<sup>1</sup>), 1845. On going by diligence south from Paris, I found myself with Denham Cookes as a companion. He was charming and full of anecdote and fun; we travelled together to Avignon, where we stayed some days and there I left him. He was killed at a steeplechase in Florence soon after. Stopped at Malta where Temple Frere was with his Uncle Hookham Frere<sup>2</sup>. On reaching Alexandria, (or was it

<sup>1</sup> From what has been said above this is probably incorrect and the middle or latter half of October more likely.

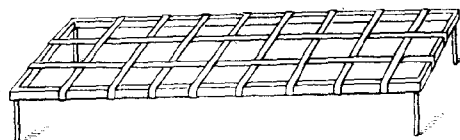
<sup>2</sup> In his *Memories*, Galton regrets not having, owing to Frere's ill-health, been able to talk to the man whose *Loves of the Triangles* had given the "*coup de grâce* to the turgid poetry that had become a temporary craze in my grandfather's time" (p. 85).

en route after Malta?) I met with Montagu Boulton and his travelling companion, Hedworth Barclay, intending to go up the Nile; they having just toured in Greece. We went together to Cairo in barges, towed up the Nile by a tug—a most luxurious and charming night. At Cairo we three agreed to make a party together up the Nile. Barclay had a courier, a Greek, Christo, who would act as cook. Boulton had a very smart courier, Evard by name, who had been once groom of the chamber, he said, to Lady Jersey. He would be butler and I undertook to engage a dragoman as my special servant and he was Ali (Mohammed,—Sureyah = the little).

We spent one day boar shooting, got no boar but wounded one and when among the tall reeds holding my gun vertically above my head, as the only chance of making way, a litter of wild pigs ran through at my very feet. I was quite helpless, could not get down my arms, but the sow did not pass me. We had to give a name to our boat and register it with its flag, and Boulton suggested an *Ibis* with the motto "Tutissimus," which we adopted. Barclay had a pointer for quail shooting. My impressions of the Nile were those that so many have expressed. Especially the pleasure of living all day barefoot and only half dressed, and of wading oneself by a header into the river, clambering back by the rudder. We lived in style and state. I think the awfulness of the Old Temples impressed me most at Carnac, 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. A little above the first cataract, when near Korosko, the stream being swift, we went as usual by virtue of Barclay's firman to impress men to tug our boat, but found they had all been already impressed by the owner of a small and dirty looking Egyptian boat, who they told us was a Bey. We went to him and spoke impudently, like arrogant Britishers and discussed loudly in English together whether we should not pitch him into the river. He shortly astonished us by speaking perfect French and after a while discovered he was a much more interesting person than we had dreamt of. He was Arnaud, a St Simonian exile, in service of Mehemet Ali, who had lately returned from Sennaar where he had been sent to look for gold. He invited us to his mud house, at which I was charmed. Perfectly simple, clean, matted, with a barometer and thermometer hung up and other scientific gear, books, &c., like a native philosopher. He then, after we had become friends, explained to us, that though he spoke English badly, he quite understood what we had said among ourselves when we first met him and made me feel very small indeed. However, we got on very well and made him talk of his travels and tell us of the country ahead, we had then no map and knew nothing hardly. He said: "Why do you follow the English routine of just going to the 2nd cataract and returning? Cross the desert and go to Khartoum." That sentence was a division of the ways in my subsequent life. We caught at the idea, he discussed it and said that the chief of the Korosko desert was then actually at the place with camels, that he knew him and would send for him to us that afternoon or evening, when we might finally settle matters. We asked Arnaud to dinner, received him in the grand style, Evard doing his best, and gave our good friend and ourselves quite as much wine as was good for us. When in the midst of the carouse the door of the cabin opened, the cool air came in, and with the cool air, the dignified cold presence of the Sheikh, with the band of sand on his forehead, the mark of his having just prostrated himself in prayer. He did look disgusted, but we got over him and finally all was arranged. We were to start the

very next afternoon. We settled to leave the boat, her captain and crew under the charge of Bob, our Arab pipe boy, as our representative, who rose easily to the position and they had orders to take the boat to Wadi Halfa and await us there. This was in mid January, we expected to return, as we did, early in March. We got off on camel back in the afternoon and encamped 3 miles from Korosko and next morning started fairly off. It *was* a desert, like the skeleton of the earth, with sand blown clean away from the bare stones, or lying here and there in drifts, table topped hills. Evard had some sort of eruptive fever and was frightfully depressed and lamenting, then Boulton got it and bore bravely up. It was hard lines for them. The water 4 days from Korosko, the only wells on the route, was brack and undrinkable; that in our water skins was horrible with the taste of leather. The waste of desert was terrible, and the way was marked by bones of slaves and camels. Often a dead camel was desiccated; it looked fairly right but when touched broke and crumbled into dust, all the inside was blown away, or eaten away by the ants leaving the skin and part of the bones. These desiccated bodies were so light, that I once held up what appeared to be half a camel when first seen and as it lay untouched. Our guide, a son or nephew of the Great Sheikh, was a jovial gay fellow and we all became excellent friends. Others joined our caravan; a man, his wife, baby and donkey, just like Joseph's flight. Also another man on foot, with no possessions but an old French cuirassier sword, wherewith he was going to join slave raids in Abyssinia. In 8 days from Korosko, we reached Abu Hamed—the sight of the Nile most refreshing, but we soon tired of the midges and air, and were glad to travel on a little inland by camel to Berber. On the way we stopped at the 5th cataract, where we waded with our guns across the river among the many islands. At Berber the Pasha received us in state and gave us lemonade from his own limes and it seemed delightful. He also lodged us in a mud house and gave us permission to hire a boat for Khartoum. The people were troublesome when we tried to start, and seized the rope and wanted to detain us. Barclay behaved with much pluck, cast off the rope and made the 2 or 3 men who were on board hoist the sail. We got away and after a little, the rest of the crew ran along the bank and swam to us, and we got off. It was quite a small one-masted boat, cabin 4 feet high, cockroaches all about but we made shift well enough. I recollect little of the sail to Khartoum, except the mud pyramids of Meroë by the way. At Khartoum we got (I suppose through the captain of our boat) a mud house facing the Blue Nile across which the dust columns were seen in numbers dancing on the plain. We heard of the existence of a wonderful Frank, possibly an Inglese; so we went to see. We knocked and walked in and there was about the most magnificent physique of a man I have ever seen, half-dressed in Arnaout costume, looking quite wild, and he turned out to be Mansfield Parkyns recently arrived there after years in Abyssinia. He had been at Trinity College as well as ourselves and having taken part in an awkward row, found it best to leave, and had travelled ever since. He put us in the way of all the "life" in Khartoum and introduced us to the greatest scoundrels I think, that could be found anywhere in a room, men who were too rascally for the Levant or even Cairo. They were slavedealers, outlaws and I know not what else. Full of stories about how *A* had been poisoned by *B*, *B* having just left the room before the story was told &c. Parkyns with perfect sang-froid and with all his wits well about

him, held his own unscathed in this blackguard Bohemia, not a bit sullied by it and much amused. We arranged with our Captain to take us all together a little way up the Nile. We could not spare time for more than a very few days. So up we went. The mournful character of the big, slow, marsh-like expanse of river was very depressing. The air was heavy and seemed to be pestiferous and I was heartily glad to get away from it. The hippopotami were in great numbers, I blazed at 40 different ones (at absurd distances though) in one day. Boulton went out one night with Parkyns and shot a poor cow by mistake for one. There was no perceptible current in the river, the offal and cook's messes that were thrown overboard each night when the boat anchored, hung about her all night and were still there in the morning, so that we had to send a man wading to a distance to fetch clean water. The river lapped over the sloping banks like a flood over a meadow. There were vast flights of flamingoes, &c. and the aspect of the river was weird and strangely melancholy. We turned back short of the Shilluk country, and returning to Khartoum, where we dropped Parkyns, sailed on to Metemneh. There we engaged camels to cross the Bayuda desert. It hardly ranks as a desert as there are many watering places, we only took 2 or 3 days rations of water with us and travelled 14 and even 16 hours a day. I started equipped in native dress, just a white cloth wrapped round with arm and shoulder bare. The effect was I got fearfully blistered by the sun, all my back and arm was covered with minute blisters side by side. It was fearfully painful at night for some days. We travelled late into the night and the tail of the great bear was the index of our 24 hour clock. We met Prince Pukler Muskaw (? spelling) by the way. I saw nothing of any wells, for we camped at night away from them and the camel men fetched the water. The ground had not at all the utter desert look of the Korosko. Rain falls there periodically and there are plenty of shabby mimosa trees. We were 6 days in getting to Meraweh. There we stopped a few days wondering at the white ants. Everything had to be laid on "angarebi," frames with strips of hide across, and on legs, otherwise the white ants got at them. I went up Jebel Barkal bare-footed as a bravado, and the sharp edges of the schist like rocks severely punished my feet. There I got the vase, with what I now know was the representative of the God Bess upon it (given to the British Museum). From Meraweh we went a short 3 days ride across the desert to New Dongola where the Pasha was a much grander person than any hitherto seen. He had a review in our honor and mounted us on thoroughbred ponies with their queer Arab seats with the cruel curbs. We all made a great mess of our riding with so unusual a seat, and if we touched the curb up went the plaguy ponies' heads, who were always at a gallop or a sudden stop. The Pasha gave a monkey, to add to the two I had got at Berber and which were my constant companions in travel sitting on the camel with me or if not, with someone else. From Dongola we rode along the left bank of the Nile to Wadi Halfa, passing that wonderful Semneh. The Nile was then low and ran in a sluice between two low rocky banks that are under water at other times. It was so narrow that we thought we might throw a stone across it and tried hard to do so, but failed, some



throws (not mine for I can't throw a bit) nearly succeeding. The river whenever we looked down upon it during our journey seemed totally unnavigable, seething among jutting rocks that were thickly set in its bed. At Wadi Halfa to our joy, we found our boat all right and Bob lording it with undisputed sway. He had actually ordered the Captain to be flogged for some offence, and the men obeyed Bob and flogged the Captain accordingly. Such a difference between the Berbers and the Egyptians. You can not strike a Berber but may flog as many Egyptians and beat them with sticks as much as you like, they are thoroughly slavish.

The voyage back, though March, became unpleasant from the Khamsin wind. It was uneventful except in the usual Nile experiences, at Cairo we hired a house in one of the quarters of the town with a big wooden key and lived there a week, conforming of course to the native ways of being in-doors by a specified and not late hour. Finally we separated—Barclay returned straight to England, Boulton by the short desert to Syria and I not being particularly well, by steamer to Beyrout. 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. Here my memory fails me. I was somehow in quarantine at Akka and made great friends with the Pasha there.—On the other hand I fancy I went straight to Beyrout. Such a change from Egypt. The people seemed so much less sedate and disagreeably go-ahead, and the verdure and hill slopes were so great a novelty to the eye. I lived rather stylishly, bought 2 good horses and a pony and jobbed a native groom, Ali remaining as my personal servant. Furnished with introductions from my Akka friend, I stayed a night with the great Druse chief in his stronghold, who fêted me with distinction believing evidently that I was a much greater personage than I was, which rendered the stay embarrassing. I went to Damascus and boarded in the house of the English Doctor (Thompson) thence as the heat was increasing I moved to Salahieh, when I took a house and set up an establishment in which figured my two Soudan monkeys and a pet ichneumon. I lived a very oriental life and became a fairly fluent talker in common Arabic, though nothing of a scholar; in fact, I am ashamed to say, I never read it or even deciphered it fluently. It was before I went to Salahieh and while still in Dr Thompson's house that faithful Ali was seized with dysentery. After an evening of parched skin and low delirium he died with my money belt, that was under his charge still round his body. We had the washers in and all the Moslem ceremonial duly attended to and I followed him to his grave, standing of course far off so as not to pollute. It was a great and serious loss. I was sincerely attached to him and condoned willingly heaps of small faults in regard to his great merits. One cold night in the desert when he and I were both chilled through, he pushed over me his rug. I did not know it till morning. I got many rides from Salahieh and spent many pleasant afternoon hours in Arab caffées sitting by the flowing waters. Colonel Churchill lived with much display near by, with his Syrian wife and I had a pleasant stay there. Finally, when the summer heats had passed I went to Lebanon and stayed a week with the Sheikh of Aden, a right good fellow. The first morning I counted 97 flea bites on the right lower arm and up a little way above the elbow. There were Druse rows going on while I was there and we had to stand a brief attack, shots being fired and the house temporarily barricaded. Going thence to Tripoli I saw the most beautiful view on which my eyes have ever rested. It was of the



Mediterranean through a gorge. At Tripoli I did a foolish thing, viz. slept in the low marshy land and caught an ague that plagued me until I wholly lost it in 1851 in Africa. Riding along the shore towards Beyrout I met Boulton—a joyous meeting. We crossed and parted and I never saw him again. He went eastwards and finally being an onlooker at the siege of Mooltan, with General Whish, took up a post of observation through a loophole in a deserted turret and when there a matchlock ball passed through his eye and brain. He was singularly gifted and amiable; an epicurean in disposition, that is to say a philosophical pleasure seeker and of sterling merit. At Beyrout I found my groom and horses had got into scrapes and I sold the latter. Being unwell with ague I felt unable then to ride to Jerusalem, so I took a place in a common collier sailing to Jaffa, making myself supremely comfortable with rugs &c., on a cleaned corner of the deck. At Jaffa I found baggage camels and in defiance of usage rode one into Jerusalem. The time when the Akka episode occurred and my stay in Mount Carmel has quite escaped me. It was there that Mr ——'s baby died and I performed some share in christening it just before its death. Also a Jesuit priest (as I believe) got hold of me and took great pains to convert me. Also I had a scramble at night to find, as I ultimately did, a wretched piece of humanity, a converted Jew, who had wandered about the hill and contrived to get himself into grief and lost himself and was become rather desperate when found. At Jerusalem I planned an expedition, common enough now but then quite new, with one fatal exception of a year or two previous namely, to follow the valley of the Jordan all the way from Tiberias to the Dead Sea. Until Costagan's time (brother of Mrs Bradshaw of Leamington) from that of the Crusader, I believe there was no record of a Christian having attempted the journey owing to the wars of the tribes and the impossibility of getting safely from each to its neighbour. But a time of peace had set in and I availed myself of it. The plan was to get water skins at Jerusalem, take them on horseback to Tiberias inflate and make a raft of them and on it to float down the Jordan. Starting from Jerusalem escorted with spearmen and all mounted, including my native cook and I think one or two others, we ultimately slept at ..... overlooking the valley of the Jordan, half way along its course (there was a row at night and some of the horses tails were cut off in derision by the attackers) thence I descended to the valley and rode up to Tiberias. After a few days stay I started back, rigged out my raft just below the bridge where the Jordan issues from the lake, to the great amusement of the escort, who had orders to ride by the side, and off I floated, the stream was far too narrow and I got capsized twice. Then came a more serious misadventure for the current swirled in a narrow channel under overhanging boughs nearly touching the water and I was knocked off and got into difficulties. I soon saw that the raft project was not feasible at that season and took again to my horse. It was really a picturesque group. I had to ride in Arab head dress with a fillet and my men with their clump of long spears with ostrich feathers at the top looked very well indeed. After a while we came to a great Arab encampment, that of the Emir Ruabah whose sister, a relative of some kind of my own escorter, Sheikh Nair Abu Nasheer (of Jericho or thereabouts) had married. He was civil but wary and punctilious, and wherever I went I was watched. He had a quantity of old chain armour, beautiful Saracenic coats of mail. It was a somewhat uneasy visit to me and I was glad to be off. We finally got to Jericho and thence to Jerusalem, I making various plans with my Sheikh

for bringing a boat from Jaffa and with his permission navigating the Dead Sea, as Costagan had done, but poor fellow he had died in the act. On returning to Jerusalem I found letters urging me to return home principally on account of some trust business for my sister Adèle. I went, hardly thinking it was a final parting with Syria, but so it was and the next year Lynch the American came, subsidized my Sheikh, surveyed the Jordan and Dead Sea very thoroughly and published the results in a big and valuable book, which by the way does not contain a word of allusion to myself, his predecessor.

FRANCIS GALTON.

A perusal of this sketch of Galton's tours in Egypt and Syria will indicate to the reader that the *Wanderlust*, however keen, had not yet ripened into the desire for scientific travel. Galton was still touring for the boyish fun of movement and of new scenes. He had not yet thoughts of the language, habits or archaeology of the people he mingled with. It was, as far as we can judge, still possible for him to settle down as a sporting country gentleman after finishing the somewhat extended "grand tour" of the day. The significant incidents of the Egyptian and Syrian tour, which seem most markedly to have weighed with him in after life, were the meeting with Arnaud—of which he wrote that his words were "a division of the ways in my subsequent life"—the incident with the Sheikh on the same day<sup>1</sup>, and the death of the faithful Ali. Galton reached England in November, 1846. One longs for the graphic letters of the earlier tours, or still better for a sample of such as came later from Africa, but none have survived. The following letter addressed to Beyrout shows that Galton must have been in continuous correspondence with some of his Cambridge friends :

WILTON CRESCENT, June 24, 1846.

MY DEAR GALTON,—Your letter was such an enormous time reaching me that if this be similarly long in arriving at its destination, I entertain serious doubts as to your getting it, particularly as I have been lazy and have put off writing till the day before I start for Ostend, amidst the infinite hurries of packing. I own I ought to have written or brickbatted earlier but Kay positively told me that it was useless as you never acknowledged his, and that he did not know where to direct. Your letter is a great work of art, worthy to be ranked with the most ingenious productions of modern times; of course I don't believe it, and am inclined to think you have been all the time in 105 Park St concealed, and examining the map of Africa. If I really could put my

<sup>1</sup> "The cabin reeked with the smells of the recent carouse, when the door opened and there stood the tall Sheikh marked with sand on his forehead that indicated recent prostration in prayer. The pure moonlight flooded the Bacchanalian cabin, and the clear cool desert air poured in. I felt swinish in the presence of his Moslem purity and imposing mien." *Memories*, p. 88.

faith in what you tell me I should look upon you as the real Carlylese hero, the "coming man" of whom Tooke used to talk at the Union, and I should prepare to fall down and kiss your slippers, or perform any amount of ritual observance. As it is, I waver in thinking you either destined to be the greatest man of your age, or as having been the perpetrator of a gigantic hoax. So I give you conditional but unbounded admiration and I express humble but ardent gratitude for the monkey, on the hypothesis I fear a most improbable one, of the dear animal not turning out a monkey of the mind, a simious Harris, a beautiful delusion, etc. If you have taken me in, it beats the famous Campbell hoax, for proud in my confidence of your veracity, I have been ensnaring everyone at dinner, breakfast, evening party, man, woman or child to commit themselves to an opinion on the sources of the Nile, when I have been forthwith down upon them with geographical facts, and have by means of them tyrannised over sundry meek and respectable members of scientific societies. Whenever there is a pause in conversation I never fail to say in a calm manner "I had a letter from Abyssinia the other day, very hot season at Dafour I believe," whereat the Horners, Murchisons, Sam Rogers etc. gape with respectful mien.

I suppose you want to know what is going on here (always on the supposition that you have not been daily to Silk Buckingham's Institute<sup>1</sup> to read the papers). In public matters, great things, corn laws repealed, ministers expected to go out in a week; in Cambridge things very little; Evans got the University Scholarship; Lushington head of the Tripos, of course; your humble servant 9th, a tremendous shave off the second class; however, fortune favoured me and I got the 2nd medal. Since this I have been three weeks at Paris, and a month reading at History. Tomorrow I start for the Rhine, Geneva, Venice and Milan—family party—alarm about cholera which the papers say is coming westward with great rapidity, and cases of death in London last week. If you have got Kay's letter you will have heard that he published a volume costing 14s., nominally at the desire of the University, whereat Whewell waxed greatly indignant and had him up before the Senate<sup>2</sup>. Campbell has nearly given up P.E. and now talks nothing but uncompromising Evangelicalism to the great annoyance of his friends. It is even becoming a matter of doubt whether the chief end of education is to impede population. But no doubt the perusal of the Poor Law articles in the "Times" will soon fan the dormant flame. My Paris trip was eminently successful, I went with Lushington, Mansfield and Bartwick, and for 3 weeks we ate the most glorious dinners in the world, at 18 francs a head, went 14 nights running to the play, and polished off some French evening parties, whereof my opinion is that they are eminently trumpeque. I take it for granted that you will come leisurely back through Italy, and therefore hope to catch a glimpse of you at Venice or Milan, monkey and all. I am afraid the amiable animal must be a source of considerable inconvenience to you when you return to civilisation. I can fancy a few more comfortable positions than that of looking after an ape in a railway train! You had better pack him up in brown paper, cover him (I believe her, I beg her pardon) with postage stamps and direct her to my gyp, or to Wilton Crescent,

<sup>1</sup> For James Silk Buckingham, see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

<sup>2</sup> Galton gives some account of Joseph Kay's book, *The Education of the Poor in England and Europe*, 1846, written by the "Travelling Bachelor of the University of Cambridge" and bearding Whewell, in his *Memories*, pp. 68-9.

where I trust every satisfaction will be afforded. I find of course on the eve of departure that all one's German has vanished as usual, and I shall have to begin the old story again with Ollendorf, satisfying a morbid anxiety as to the hunger of the good baker's dog, etc. I shall expect lessons in Tigheree, and the scimitar exercise. Your giving up mediculeizing is a great blow; who is henceforth to tell me pleasant stories about lupus, and purpuristic elephantiasis of the pia mater; you had much better not become a parson, but come with me to Maimachtin in 3 or 4 years.

Ever most sincerely yours, H. F. HALLAM.

There is little doubt that Galton's view of life was indirectly widened by his residence among and friendship with Mohammedans. He had in later days a great respect and admiration for them; during his stay in Syria he conformed largely to their way of life and possibly, in a measure, to their religion<sup>1</sup>. Experience of another great religious faith, the devout followers of which compared in conduct at many points favourably with his own co-religionists, led Galton to a wider view of the origin and function of religion in general, and there is little doubt that from this period he ceased to be an orthodox Christian in the customary sense. Writing in 1869 (see Plate II), Galton says that "the *Origin of Species* formed a real crisis in my life; your book drove away the constraint of my old superstition, as if it had been a nightmare, and was the first to give me freedom of thought." I think this really means that Galton owed to Darwin a *positive* faith; his negative attitude towards the old views had arisen thirteen or fourteen years before the publication of *The Origin*, and had formed to some extent a division between Francis and the more orthodox members of his family. The first blow to orthodoxy came from the experience that more than one religion helped men efficiently in the conduct of life, and brought the ideal into closer touch with the actual as a controlling and purifying factor. Galton taught absolute toleration, both in religious belief and in formal observance; he was prepared for family prayers, if they aided anybody in his household, and he would have accepted a fetish, had he thought the fetish-worshipper thereby better able to face the moral difficulties of life; he had none of the intellectual hatred of Huxley or Clifford for what their minds recognised

<sup>1</sup> Bosworth Smith, who advanced the view in 1874 that Mohammedanism was in some respects better suited than Christianity to the Oriental races and to the negro, writes to Galton in 1875: "Your view of Islam as compared with Christianity would, I fancy, from what you said to me, be even more favourable than mine."

as unreasoning. Speaking on his own initiative to the present writer about a friend who had then recently joined the Catholic Church, he said: "Yes, I think it will be a real help, a controlling factor in X's conduct," and then he added: "How impossible it would all be for you or me!" It appears to the writer that the recognition of the relativity of religion and its individual temperamental value was attained at this time, if a positive view of life which suited his own temperament only came to Galton with the *Origin of Species*. Much light would doubtless have been thrown on this point had the Egyptian and Syrian letters been preserved. But the fact that they did contain evidence of Galton's religious development may be the very reason why they have wholly perished.

The years which succeeded Galton's return from Syria are a blank except for what he has himself told us in his *Memories*, Chapter VIII. The four years in question, he himself entitled "Hunting and Shooting." He writes:

"I returned to my mother and sister, who then occupied Claverdon, much in need of a little rest. I was also conscious that with all my varied experiences, I was ignorant of the very ABC of the life of an English country gentleman, such as most of the friends of my family had been familiar with from childhood. I was totally unused to hunting, and I had no proper experience of shooting. This deficiency was remedied during the next three or four years" (*Memories*, p. 110).

We find Galton for the following three years spending part of his time in Leamington, hunting with a set chiefly noteworthy for their extravagance and recklessness; part of his time on Scottish moors, shooting grouse, or sailing in the Hebrides, and lastly part of his time—which amounted to weeks and months—in London, walking and riding with friends or attending meets of the Royal Stag Hounds. A few letters of Henry Hallam, spared apparently from the holocaust, indicate the thoughts most prominent in the minds of both young men—their ambition was to shoot 100 brace in a day, to kill 87 hares in a quarter of an hour, to avoid the tailor-like habit of putting a bullet into the haunch of a stag; the most provoking thing was to fail in a shot,—“I would have given my eyes to have brought the animal down.” Landseer was not the man and the artist, but “the crackshot never missing and quite up to all the dodges of the sport; he had got and shot and killed his animal very neatly.” The shooting experience was undoubtedly of value to Galton in his later

African work, but the strange thing is that it seemed to absorb his whole nature, and to be done not for the sake of the experience, but in the pure pursuit of occupation. He tells us himself that he "read a good deal all the time, and digested what I read by much thinking about it" (*Memories*, p. 119). But Galton was never a great student of other men's writings; he was never an accumulator like his cousin Charles Darwin; and the most well-read and annotated books in his library certainly belong to a later date and to periods of definite lines of research. Perhaps the words which follow the above quotation, "It has always been my unwholesome way of work to brood much at irregular times," better explain his development during these fallow years. Be this as it may, Galton's pursuit of travel and sport for pure amusement's sake lasted fully five years, but came to an end almost as suddenly and inexplicably as it commenced; Galton—to use his own words—had finished sowing his "wild oats" by the summer of 1849, and was returning once more to those scientific pursuits, which had been his delight in 1840, and which he was never again to desert except under stress of ill-health.

Nearly all record of developmental influences during this period having perished, we are thrown back on surmise and hypothesis to account for these fallow years in the life of a man who both before and after was conspicuous for intellectual activity. Naturally we turn in the first place to the many hereditary strands blended in his character. On the one side we have the manifold scientific tastes of the Darwin stock, combined, however, with love for purely country pursuits and with sporting tendencies which have dominated not a few members of both the Darwin and Galton families; on the other side we have the social aptitudes and the keen love for the pleasures of life, which marked and led to the downfall of the Colyear and Sedley stocks, strangely united with the business aptitude and disciplinary sense of the Quaker blood of Farmer and Barclay. If we examine most of Galton's relatives we find one or at most two of these very different hereditary strands manifest in the same individual; but in Galton himself, and probably as source alike of his mental width and of his charm of character, we find these various strands commingled—the word is here better than blended—in a single nature. To speak for a moment in the crude language of a current theory of heredity, it is as if opposite allelomorphs could be united in the same zygote and alternately dominate

its characteristics. These fallow years show the dominance of determinants of which we are fully conscious in tracing Galton's family history, but which after 1850 play only a subordinate, albeit a graceful part in his character and activities. In 1849 Galton's mechanical tastes revived and his scientific bent came once more to its rights. When the "spring-fret" again came o'er him, he knew his "naked soul" and had found a congenial purpose in life.

In the failure of any record of environmental influence<sup>1</sup>, we can only attribute the difference between the Soudanese and the Central African journeys to the not unfamiliar experience of different hereditary tendencies developing potency at successive stages of an individual's growth. Charles Darwin was a student and naturalist from his College days; Francis Galton's six fallow years threw back his work in life, so that much of it was achieved at an age when most minds grow quiescent. But the delay was not greatly to his, nor, in the long run, to the public disadvantage. His earlier papers on the improvement of the human race by conscious selection were nearly stillborn, they faced a world quite unripe for the ideas Galton had to teach. The acceptance of the principle of Natural Selection and the recognition of science as a capital authority in human affairs had to make marked progress before Galton's teaching could reach its audience, and produce its effect.

<sup>1</sup> We know how the publication of the *Origin of Species* moved Francis Galton. At first it seemed to the writer of this biography that the voyage of the "Beagle" might have turned Galton's thoughts to scientific travel, but the *Journal* of that voyage appeared in 1837, five or six years after the voyage, and there is no reference to it in Galton's letters of that date or later. The famous Linnaean Society publication made jointly with Wallace dates from 1858, when Galton had already settled down to scientific work.



FRANCIS GALTON.  
From two early photographs in the possession of Mr. Wheeler Galton.