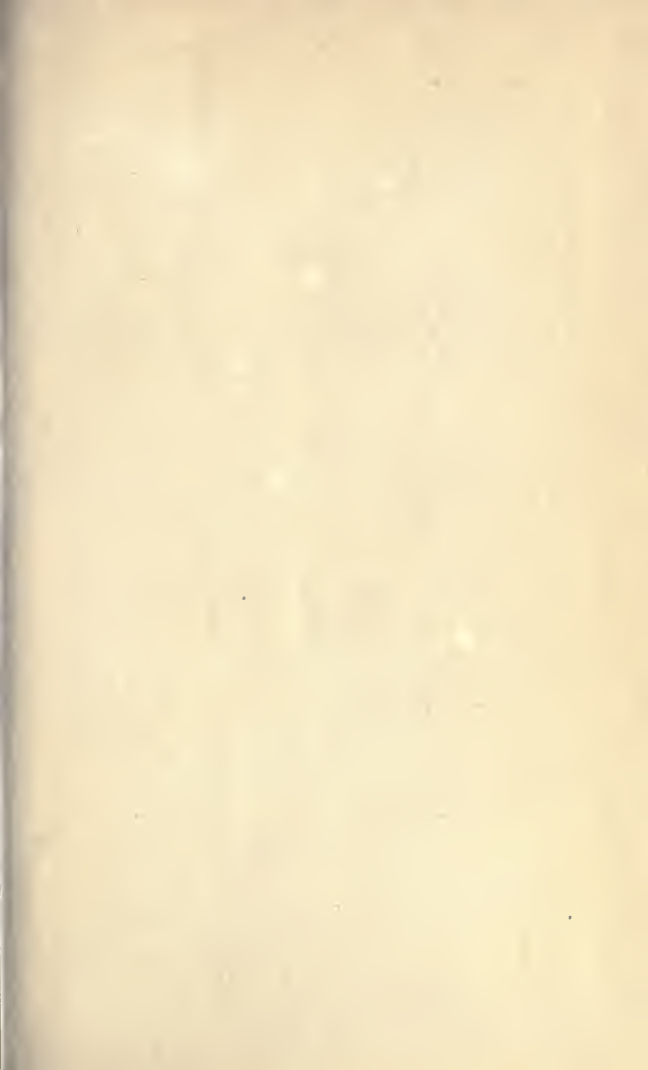





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JAMES BRUCE

OF KINNAIRD

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Bruce, James

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THE
LIFE OF BRUCE,

THE
AFRICAN TRAVELLER.

BY
MAJOR SIR F. B. HEAD.

Magna est veritas, et praevalabit!

THE THIRD EDITION.

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TO THE BINDER.

Portrait of BRUCE, for Frontispiece.

The small Map to face page 39.

The large Map to be placed at the end of the Volume.

LIFE OF BRUCE,

THE AFRICAN TRAVELLER.

CHAPTER I.

Bruce's birth—Education—Marriage—Travels in Europe.

JAMES BRUCE was born at the family residence of Kinnaird, in the county of Stirling, in Scotland, on the 14th day of December, 1730. His father was the eldest son of Helen Bruce of Kinnaird*, and David Hay of Woodcockdale, descended from an old and respectable branch of the Hays of Erroll, who, distinguished in ancient Scottish history by their bravery, received from Robert I. the hereditary office of high constable of Scotland. Bruce's mother was the daughter of James Graham, Esq., of Airth, dean of the faculty of advocates, and judge of the high court of admiralty in Scotland—a man distinguished by his abilities, and respected for his public and private virtues.

On the 23rd of November, 1733, Bruce lost his mother. She died of a lingering disorder, which had long undermined her constitution; and, scarcely three years old, he thus unconsciously suffered the greatest misfortune that can befall a child, and

* The Bruces of Kinnaird trace their pedigree to that Norman house which once occupied the throne of Scotland.

which nothing in this world can compensate. A few years afterwards, his father married the daughter of James Glen, of Longroft, in the shire of Linlithgow, by whom he had two daughters and six sons, one of whom, while fighting as a volunteer in the forlorn hope, was mortally wounded in the breach of a fortress at the Havannah; another, in the service of the East-India Company, proposed the attack, and led on the party which, on the 3rd of August, 1780, took from the Mahrattas the fortress of Gualior.

Though well-formed, Bruce did not, as a child, appear to possess that athletic constitution and unusual stature which he attained in manhood. The relentless disorder which had hurried his mother to an early grave, seemed to have recoiled upon him: he was subject to frequent pains in the breast; and his temper, contrary to the impetuous and daring character which it afterwards assumed, was mild, quiet, and gentle. At eight years of age, his father, resolving to give to his apparent heir the advantages of a liberal education, sent him to London to the friendly care of his uncle, Counsellor Hamilton, under whose superintendence he remained until the year 1742, when, being twelve years old, he was removed to Harrow school, which was then conducted by Dr. Cox. Young Bruce prosecuted his studies with unusual steadiness and assiduity; and, on the 14th of July, 1744, Dr. Glen wrote to Bruce's father, his brother-in-law, as follows:—

“What I wrote to you about James is all true, with this difference only, that you may say, as the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon, the one-half has not been told you, for I never saw so fine a lad of his years in my life; but, lest I should have been deceived in my own opinion of him, I waited purposely on Dr. Cox to get information how he was

profiting, whose answer to me on that occasion was this—‘When you write to Mr. Bruce’s father about his son, you cannot say too much; for he is as promising a young man as ever I had under my care, and, for his years, I never saw his fellow.’”

Bruce remained at Harrow till the 8th of May, 1746; and, in the four years he was at school, he not only acquired a competent share of classical knowledge, but won the esteem of many individuals, whose valuable friendship he retained through life. He was now nearly sixteen years of age; but his health, which had always been delicate, was by no means confirmed. He was much too tall for his age; his breast was weak; his general appearance indicated that he had grown faster than his strength; and his relations were alarmed lest he should become consumptive: however, it was now necessary to consider what profession he was to follow, and Mr. Hamilton was accordingly requested by the elder Bruce to speak to him upon this important subject. Mr. Hamilton was much pleased with young Bruce’s replies; and on the 28th of June, 1746, he addressed his father as follows:—“He is a mighty good youth, a very good scholar, and extremely good tempered—has good solid sense, and a good understanding. I have talked to him about what profession he would most incline to: he very modestly says, he will apply himself to whatever profession you shall direct, but he, in his own inclination, would study divinity, and be a parson. The study of the law, and also that of divinity, are, indeed, both of them attended with uncertainty of success; but as he inclines to the profession of a clergyman, for which he has a well-fitted gravity, I must leave it to you to give your own directions; though I think, in general, it is most advisable to comply with a young man’s

inclination—especially as the profession which he proposes is in every respect fit for a gentleman.”

This curious picture of young Bruce's early character, may appear extraordinary when compared with the performances of his after life, yet a few moments' reflection traces the resemblance. Many men possess talents—many possess application—the very few who possess both, become, what we justly term, great men: there is, however, one other ingredient, namely, health, which, in proportion to its quantity, induces men to seek occupations more or less active or sedentary; and it may be observed, that this ingredient, like the down upon which many vegetable seeds fly spontaneously to a distant soil, transports men to the remotest regions—thus scattering over the surface of the earth, talents and application which, without a superabundance of health, would have been all at home, directed very nearly to the same studies: and hence it was that Bruce, when a sickly lad, as much surprised his friends by his grave, sedentary disposition, as he afterwards astonished them by his wild wandering propensities, and daring researches.

After leaving Harrow, Bruce went, for about a year, to an academy, where, besides classics, he studied French, arithmetic, and geometry. In compliance with his father's wishes, he cheerfully abandoned his inclination to enter the church, and agreed to prosecute his future studies with a view to become an advocate at the Scottish bar. He accordingly took leave of his English friends—one of whom, Mr. Hamilton, wrote to Mr. D. Bruce in the following terms:—“As to my giving him advice with respect to his conduct and behaviour on his journey, I apprehend that to be entirely unnecessary, because it is with pleasure I think that God Almighty has

given him an understanding superior to what is common at his age, and sufficient, I hope, to conduct him through all the various stages of life."

With this well-earned character young Bruce returned to his native country, in the month of May, 1747. He arrived in better health than his father had been led to expect, and spent the whole of the autumn in the enjoyment of the sports of the field, for which he suddenly imbibed an affection that he retained to the last hour of his life. Considerably strengthened by this manly and healthy recreation, at the end of the year he commenced his studies at the university of Edinburgh, by attending the lectures of the professors of civil law, Scotch law, and universal history; but he now found how much easier it is for a young man to promise than to perform, and how painfully the mind proceeds on the journey which it has not willingly undertaken. The deep, important details of the Roman and Scottish codes were subjects for which Bruce's eager mind had no affinity—they were grave companions with whom he soon felt that he could never associate. In vain he studied distinctions which he did not remember, and puzzled himself with points, of which he could not comprehend the importance. An ardent admirer of truth and simplicity, he very rashly conceived that in the studies which his father had proposed for him he could worship neither the one nor the other; but while, in filial obedience, he hung his bewildered head over his law-books, his youthful heart was apparently devoted to lovelier and more congenial objects, for on the leaves of "*Elementa Juris Civilis Heineccii*," on which stands the name of "*James Bruce, 1749*," we find written in the middle of some very grave maxims, "*Bella ingrata, io morirò!*" with other equally love-sick sentiments,

from Metastasio and Ariosto. However, Bruce's bodily sickness soon closed the serious volume of the law: his health became impaired, and his physicians wisely prescribing for his mind rather than for his body, ordered him to return to the country to enjoy fresh air and exercise. This simple medicine soon restored him to health; but it was now acknowledged that his prospect of succeeding at the bar was very limited, and to his great joy it was at last determined that he should abandon that learned profession for ever. He was, in fact, incompetent to perform its labours; and yet it is not altogether unworthy of remark, that the boy who was thus lost in the lanes and labyrinths of Scottish law lived to be the man who afterwards reached the long hidden fountains of the Nile!

Bruce remained for several years without a profession. He at last fixed on India as a field, the distance, vastness, and novelty of which were better suited to the ardent disposition of his mind; but, being now considerably above the age for receiving a writership from the East-India Company, he resolved to petition the Court of Directors for permission to settle under its patronage as a free trader. In July, 1753, in the twenty-second year of his age, he left Scotland, with a view to prosecute this design. On arriving in London, his English friends and former acquaintances received him with the greatest kindness; and during the time he spent in soliciting permission from the Directors, he lived among them in the interesting character of one who was soon to leave them for a very considerable period of his life.

By one of those friends whose kindness he was thus enjoying, he was introduced to Adriana Allan, whose mind accorded with the beauty of her person. She was the daughter of Mrs. Allan, the widow of

an eminent wine-merchant, who had raised himself to opulence by attention and integrity. This young person was elegant in her manners and appearance, and as remarkable for a gentle, unassuming temper, as for a warm, affectionate disposition. Bruce very easily fell in love with Adriana Allan, who received his attentions with that artless gratitude which seemed to be peculiarly due to one who was apparently to bid her adieu almost for ever! However, this was otherwise decreed. Her heart was a volume which Bruce found not so difficult to understand as Heineccius's *Institutes*: he admired its type—he adored its binding—in short, he no sooner found himself possessed of this young person's affections, than he ardently resolved to prefer them to his wealthy prospects in India. He accordingly addressed himself to Mrs. Allan, who listened with placid approbation to the proposal of marriage which he had already made to her daughter, and she herself suggested, that, having no profession, he should take a share in the wine-trade; and although Bruce knew nothing of that business, yet as it was to be the link which was to connect him with the object of his affections—he eagerly declared himself ready to embrace them both, and seemed suddenly to have inherited the ardent spirit of the trade. The marriage took place on the third of February, 1754; and Bruce took an active part in the management of the concern. The dealings of the company were extensive; and from many people he received marks of their approbation and friendship. He appeared now to be on a road which was to lead him to wealth and happiness, but this flattering prospect became suddenly overcast. His young wife had inherited from her family the seeds of a fatal disease, which in a few months after her marriage made it necessary

for her to leave the thick, foggy atmosphere of London. She resided at Bristol for a few months, for the benefit of the waters, but with little advantage: her complaint was alleviated,—not removed. Her last journey was to try the mild climate of the south of France. Exhausted, however, by travelling, she was obliged to stop at Paris, where she apparently rallied for a few days; but consumption was only insidiously gaining strength to overpower her, and a week after her arrival, she again relapsed, the hectic flush vanished, and she expired!

While Bruce was attending her last moments, he was driven almost to distraction by the disgraceful bigotry of the French priests, who, disguised in the garb of Christian ministers, crowded round his door to persecute the last moments of one whom they termed a dying heretic; and, even when the pale object of their unmanly persecution had ceased to exist, the intolerant fury of these monks sought to deny her Christian burial. At the hour of midnight, when the savage passions of his enemies were lulled in sleep, Bruce attended the corpse of his young wife to her untimely grave, and a month afterwards, on the 12th of November, 1754, he thus addressed his father:—

“ My mind is so shocked, and the impression of that dreadful scene at Paris so strongly fixed, that I have it every minute before my eyes as distinctly as it was then happening. Myself a stranger in the country; my servants unacquainted with the language and country, my presence so necessary among them, and indispensably so with my dear wife; my poor girl dying before my eyes, three months gone with child, full of that affection and tenderness which marriage produces when people feel the happiness, but not the cares of it; many of the Roman Catholic

clergy hovering about the doors, myself unable to find any expedient to keep them from disturbing her in her last moments. . . . But I will write no more. I cannot, however, omit telling you an instance of Lord Albemarle's very great humanity. The morning before my wife died, he sent his chaplain down to offer his services in our distress. After hearing the service for the sick read, and receiving the sacrament together, he told me, in case I received any trouble from the priests, my Lord desired I would tell them I belonged to the English ambassador. When my wife died, the chaplain came again to me, desired me to go home with him, and assured me that my Lord had given him orders to see my wife buried in the ambassador's burying-ground, which was accordingly done; and had it not been for this piece of humanity, she must have been buried in the common yard, where the wood is piled that serves the town for firing. Having ordered the mournful solemnity, with as much decency as is allowed in that country to heretics, at midnight, between the tenth and eleventh ult., accompanied only by the chaplain, a brother of my Lord Foley's, and our own servants, we carried her body to the burying-ground, at the Porte St. Martin, where I saw all my comfort and happiness laid with her in the grave. From thence, almost frantic, against the advice of everybody, I got on horseback, having ordered the servant to have post-horses ready, and set out, in the most tempestuous night I ever saw, for Boulogne, where I arrived next day without stopping. There the riding in the night time, in the rain, want of food, which for a long time I had not tasted, want of rest, fatigue, and excessive concern, threw me into a fever; but after repeated bleedings, and the great care taken of me by Mr.

Hay, I recovered well enough to set out for London on the Wednesday. I arrived at home on the Thursday, when my fever again returned, and a violent pain in my breast. Thus ended my unfortunate journey, and with it my present prospects of happiness in this life."

After this melancholy event, Bruce returned to his business in London; but he soon found that the tie which had connected him to the wine-trade was completely broken. Its occupation no longer afforded him amusement; it was a subject uncongenial to his mind; its profits, it is true, still offered him wealth, but it was wealth without happiness. In the tranquillity of domestic life, he had felt more than satisfied; but now left alone, his eager, active spirit pined for more arduous employment than such a business could afford him. He therefore at once gave up the chief burden of the management to his partner; and, resolving to embrace the first opportunity to resign his share altogether, he applied himself to studies calculated to divert his mind from painful recollections and reflections. For about two years, he fagged at the Spanish and Portuguese languages, which he learned to pronounce with great accuracy. He also laboured very hard in practising several different styles of drawing. Fortunately for his views, the trade in which he was engaged required a regular and constant intercourse with France, Portugal, and Spain. The plan which he had secretly formed of visiting the continent happily coincided with his business; and he looked forward, therefore, to the time when he should travel over the south of Europe with the taste and judgment of a scholar.

After having made a short visit to the islands of Guernsey and Alderney, he sailed in the month of July for the continent, and spent the remainder of

the year in Portugal and Spain. His professed object was to be present at the vintage of that season, but his real intention was to view the state of society and science in those kingdoms. He landed at Corunna in Galicia, on the fifth of July, and proceeded to Ferrol, where he remained a few days. From Ferrol he travelled to Oporto, and thence to Lisbon. In Portugal he was much diverted with the novelty of seeing manners and customs different from his own; his journals during this period are filled with satirical remarks on the apparent pride and stiffness of the nobility, and the ignorance of the clergy. The following may be given as a light specimen of one of his first impressions as a young traveller:—

“There are many particular customs in Portugal, all of which may be known by this rule, that whatever is done in the rest of the world in one way, is in Portugal done by the contrary, even to the rocking of the cradle, which, I believe, in all the rest of the world, is from side to side, but in Portugal is from head to foot; I fancy it is from this early contrariety that their brains work in so different a manner all their lives after. A Portuguese boatman always rows standing, not with his face but his back to the stern of the boat, and pushes his oar from him. When he lands you, he turns the stern of the boat to the shore, and not the head; if a man and woman ride on the same mule, the woman sits before the man, with her face the contrary way to what they do in England;—when you take leave of any person to whom you have been paying a visit, the master of the house always goes out of the room, down stairs, and out of the house before you,” &c.

After travelling about Portugal for nearly four months, Bruce entered Spain,—but instead of going

at once to Madrid, he turned to the right, passed through Toledo, and made an excursion over the mountains into the province of New Castile. Having advanced beyond the Sierra-Morena, he traversed the districts of Cordova and Seville, on the river Guadalquivir, and about the middle of November reached Madrid. In this rapid journey he seems to have considerably improved his knowledge of the Spanish language, and to have made several attentive and judicious observations. His character, which had hitherto been concealed by various untoward circumstances, now began to appear in its real colours. The traces of oriental manners visible in the south of Spain, the ruined palaces of the Caliphs, and the tales of romantic chivalry interwoven with the Moorish wars, suggested to him the idea that an inquiry into the history of Spain during the eight centuries in which it was possessed by the Arabs, would elucidate many of the obscure causes which had obstructed the prosperity of that country. Two large and unexplored collections of Arabic manuscripts belonging to the Spanish crown, were lying buried in the monastery of St. Lawrence, and in the Library of the Escorial; and though Bruce was as yet but little acquainted with the Arabic language, he felt a strong ambition to trace, through this tedious labyrinth, the Moorish history of the country. On reaching Madrid, he procured an introduction to Don Ricardo Wall, minister to his Catholic Majesty, a gentleman of British extraction and superior abilities, and from him he earnestly solicited assistance in the researches which he desired to make in Arabic literature. Mr. Wall frankly told Bruce, that the jealousy with which the Spaniards concealed their records and history from every intelligent foreigner, obstructed all access to the library of the Escorial;

but the minister, pleased with the unusual spirit of adventure and intelligence which he had evinced, used every endeavour to persuade him to enter his master's service. Bruce, however, had already many roaming projects in his head ; he was, therefore, unwilling to settle, but, like the swallow, about to take its departure it knows not where, he kept constantly on the wing, flying apparently anywhere rather than to rest. After having made many observations on the several places in Spain which he visited, on Christmas day, 1757, he arrived at Pampelona, the capital of Navarre, on his way to France.

Having crossed the Pyrenees, he went to Bordeaux, where, delighted with the cheerful vivacity of French society, he remained several months among friends and some relations who were residing there. From Bordeaux he travelled through France to Strasburg ; then, following the course of the Rhine, to its confluence with the Maine, he visited Frankfort. Returning to the romantic valley of the Rhine, he travelled to Cologne, from whence he proceeded to Brussels, the capital of the Austrian Netherlands, which country he had long been extremely desirous to examine. On the second day after his arrival, he happened to be in the company of a young man, a perfect stranger to him, who was rudely insulted. Bruce foolishly remonstrated with the aggressor, who sent him a challenge, which he accepted. They met ; Bruce wounded his antagonist twice, and in consequence left Brussels immediately for Holland—whence proceeding towards Hanover, he arrived in time to see the battle of Crevelt. This was the first military operation which Bruce had ever witnessed. Often had he boasted, and still more often had he dreamt, of what he was always delighted to term the exploits of his ancestors, but he had hitherto only

read or heard of war. The moment he became acquainted with its reality, it appeared in his excited mind to be a brilliant game, teeming with prizes and with blanks, a legal gambling of life, which, by comparison, made every other employment appear trifling and insipid; and, impressed with these feelings, which ever have been, and ever will be, both applauded and condemned, he resolved to forsake the peaceful life he had hitherto led, and to seek adventures which he conceived were more congenial to the spirit of his ancestors.

On his way to England he received a letter at Rottèrdam, informing him of the death of his father. The inestimable affection of a mother Bruce had never known; and by the demise of his father, a man of sound character and abilities, he was now deprived of all that he had ever known of a parent. He immediately proceeded to England, and arrived there in the end of July, 1758. In consequence of his father's death, Bruce succeeded to the family estate of Kinnaird, a respectable inheritance, but inadequate to the wants of his growing ambition. He did not immediately visit Scotland, being partly occupied in his business in the wine-trade; but he gradually retired from this occupation, and, in 1761, three years after his return, the partnership was legally dissolved. During this period he had been intently employed in acquiring the Eastern languages:—and in the course of studying the Arabic (a branch of learning at that time little connected with European knowledge), he was induced to examine, in the works of Ludolf, the Ethiopic, or Geez, which study first carried his attention to the mountains of Abyssinia. While he was thus employed, the establishment of the Carron Company in Scotland caused a very considerable addition to his fortune;

his property partly consisting of coal-mines, which were required by that company for the smelting of their iron.

A circumstance now happened, which forms the leading feature in the singular history of Bruce's life. During the few days which he had spent at Ferrol, in Gallicia, a report was circulated that the court of Spain was about to engage in war with Great Britain. On considering the means of defence which the place possessed, it had appeared to Bruce that an attack upon it by a British squadron could not fail to be successful, and that in case of a war with Spain, it was the point at which that country ought to be invaded.

On his return to England, although perfectly unknown to the country, Bruce, a travelling partner in the wine-trade, boldly resolved to submit his project to Mr. Pitt. He accordingly fully explained to his friend, Mr. Wood, then under-secretary of state, the circumstances on which he had formed his opinion; and, unwilling to appear as one of those who valorously invent expeditions of danger, which they most prudently call upon others to carry into execution, he concluded by saying, that in case a war with Spain should be resolved on by the ministry, if the king would entrust him in a single boat with a pair of colours, he would plant them with his own hand on the beach at Ferrol.

Bruce was now sent for by Mr. Pitt, with whom he had the honour of conversing on the subject; and, at the minister's suggestion, he drew up a memorandum of his project. He was then informed by Mr. Wood that Mr. Pitt intended to employ him on a particular service; that he might, however, go down for a few weeks to his own country to settle his affairs, but by all means to be ready upon a call.

“ Nothing could be more flattering,” says Bruce, “ than such an offer ; to be thought worthy, when so young, of any employment by Mr. Pitt was doubly a preferment.” No time was lost ; but, just after Bruce had received orders to return to London, Mr. Pitt went to Bath, and resigned his office.

This disappointment was the more sensibly felt, as it was the first Bruce had met with in public life. However, shortly after Mr. Pitt’s resignation, he was informed by Mr. Wood that the memorandum he had addressed to Mr. Pitt had been laid before the king, and had been strongly recommended by Lord Halifax. The Earl of Egremont and Mr. Grenville had several meetings with Bruce to concert an expedition against Ferrol, the execution of which was to be entrusted to Lord Howe ; but, at the earnest request of the Portuguese ambassador, the project was suddenly abandoned, and, on the death of Lord Egremont, Bruce’s expectations again vanished.

Disappointed in his offer of public service, he retired to his estate in Scotland ; but he was shortly again called to London by Lord Halifax, who, appreciating Bruce’s character, nobly observed to him, that being in the vigour of life, at the height of his reading, health, and activity, it would be ignoble were he to turn peasant, and bury himself in obscurity and idleness, while the coast of Barbary, which might be said to be just at our door, had been but partially explored by Dr. Shaw, who had not pretended to give to the public any details of the magnificent remains of ruined architecture which he, as well as Sanson, had vouched to have seen in great quantities all over the country. Lord Halifax, therefore, expressed a wish that Bruce should be the first, in the reign just beginning, to set an example of making large additions to the royal collection ; he

pledged himself to be Bruce's supporter and patron, and to make good to him the promises which he had received from former ministers. The discovery of the source of the Nile was also a subject of their conversation ; and although it was merely mentioned as a feat to be performed only by a more experienced traveller, yet Bruce always declared that it was at that instant, of his life that his heart suggested to him, " that this great discovery should either," as he says, " be achieved by me, or remain, as it had done for the last two thousand years, a defiance to all travellers, and an opprobrium to geography."

Fortune seemed to favour his scheme. Mr. Aspinall, having been very cruelly and ignominiously treated by the Dey of Algiers, had resigned his consulship, and Mr. Ford, a merchant, the Dey's acquaintance, had been appointed in his stead ; but dying a few days afterwards, the consulship again became vacant ; and Lord Halifax pressed Bruce to accept it, as being convenient for making the proposed expedition. " This favourable event," says Bruce, " finally determined me. I had all my life applied unweariedly, perhaps with more love than talent, to drawing, the practice of mathematics, and especially that part necessary to astronomy. The transit of Venus was at hand. It was certainly known that it would be visible once at Algiers, and there was great reason to expect that it might be twice. I had furnished myself with a large apparatus of instruments, the completest of their kind, for the observation. In the choice of these I had been assisted by my friend Admiral Campbell, and Mr. Russell, secretary to the Turkish Company. Every other necessary had been provided in proportion. It was a pleasure now to know, that it was not from a rock or a wood, but from my own house at Algiers,

I could deliberately take measures to place myself in the list of men of science of all nations, who were then preparing for the same scientific attempt."

On his appointment to be consul of Algiers, Bruce had the honour of being presented to his Majesty George III., who graciously requested him to make accurate drawings of the ruins of ancient architecture which he should discover in the course of his travels; and to give Bruce a liberal opportunity of improving his taste, and to qualify him for collecting with greater ability the remains of antiquity in Africa, the southern region of the Roman empire, it was arranged that he should travel through France into Italy, and remain there for some months, under the pretext of waiting for some despatches which were there to be forwarded to him.

Delighted with prospects so congenial to his disposition, at the age of thirty-two he sailed from England in June, 1762; and though some objections had been made as to particular passports solicited by our government from the French secretary of state, M. de Choiseul waived such exceptions with regard to Bruce, and politely assured him, in a letter accompanying his passport, that those difficulties did not in any shape regard him, but that he was perfectly at liberty to pass through, or remain in France, with those that accompanied him, without limiting their number, as short or as long a time as should be agreeable to him.

Having arrived at Rome (August, 1762), Bruce proceeded to Naples, and there, for some months, awaited his Majesty's further commands. He afterwards went to Florence, where he remained most studiously occupied for some time.

It would be tedious to enter into a detail of the antiquities, paintings, and other curiosities, which

Bruce observed in the course of his journey, as they have been visited by thousands of our countrymen, and have been minutely described by travellers of every possible description. It is only necessary to state that Bruce made very minute memoranda respecting every remarkable place or object which he visited* : that his catalogue of paintings is very extensive ; and that his notes indicate the variety of his knowledge, the correctness of his judgment, and the exalted feelings with which he visited those faded scenes of Roman glory, which, like Byron's " Greece," may be justly compared to a corpse, from which a noble spirit has departed.

While at Naples, he received from slaves, redeemed from the province of Constantia, descriptions of magnificent ruins, which they had seen while traversing that country in the camp of their master, the Bey ; and as it was Bruce's intention not only to take accurate drawings of these, but also to endeavour to make a map of the country, with observations on its natural history, and on the manners and language of its inhabitants, he justly reflected that the packing and re-packing, mounting and rectifying the instruments alone would wholly occupy one man, and he therefore wrote to several of his correspondents, acquainting them with his situation, and requesting them to procure him an assistant. For a long time no one appeared willing to share the fatigues of such journeys ; but at last a young man was engaged, who was then studying architecture at Rome. He was a native of Bologna, named Luigi Balugani. Besides the assistance of this person, Bruce provided himself in England with

* It appears, from sketches found among his papers, that he intended to write a dissertation on the ancient and modern state of Rome.

two camera obscuras, the largest of which was made to separate into pieces, folding compactly on hinges: its body was a hexagon of six feet diameter, with a conical top; in this instrument, as in a summer-house, the draughtsman sat unseen, and in executing views of ruined architecture, could do more work in one hour than the readiest artist, without such assistance, in seven.

After having passed eight months at Naples, Rome, Bologna, and Florence*, during which time he most attentively visited the antiquities, paintings, cabinets, &c., availing himself of every opportunity to improve his skill in drawing, he at last received his despatches from England. Immediately proceeding to Leghorn, Bruce embarked on board the Montreal man-of-war, and arrived at Algiers on the 15th of March, 1763.

* The papers which are preserved relating to this journey are, "a narrative of the route from Turin to Bologna—inscriptions—account of Trajan's tables—of Bologna—of the paintings there. Route from Bologna to Rome—description of the paintings in St. Peter's—the Vatican—Capitol—Belvidere—Albano—Barbarini Palace—in the Palaces Spado—little Farnese—Corsini—Borghese, &c.—Route from Rome to Naples—Dissertation on Ancient and Modern Rome, Florence, &c. &c."

CHAPTER II.

Bruce's residence at Algiers as British Consul.

IT has already been stated that Bruce had been appointed to the consulship of Algiers to succeed Mr. Aspinall, who had been recalled. This gentleman had, with great firmness and integrity of conduct, opposed many unjust demands which had been made upon him by the Dey, who, in consequence, sent a letter to England, requesting that that consul might be dismissed, and Mr. Ford, a British merchant, who had lately returned to England, appointed in his stead. This official document, addressed "to the English Vizier, Mr. Pitt," is a curious specimen of barbarous diplomacy:—"My high friend: For some time past John Ford was a merchant at Algiers, whom we desire you will appoint consul, and send him a day the sooner to us, because your consul in Algiers is an obstinate person and like an animal!"

This Mr. Ford died in England; and on Bruce's arrival at Algiers, he presented to the old Dey credentials from his Britannic Majesty, graciously appointing as consul, "our trusty and well-beloved James Bruce, Esq., whom, by his birth and education, as well as by his knowledge and experience, we have judged to be every way qualified for this trust."

Ali Pasha, the Dey of Algiers, was one of those savage characters, who, on the coast of Barbary, are very justly distinguished by the appellation of great men. In the history of mankind, it is very curious

to observe that, in the various ages of society, different descriptions of men rise in strata to the surface, where they remain until a moral revolution, altering their specific gravity, obliges them to sink into oblivion. In a highly-civilised community, a man rises to distinction by the estimable qualities of his nature; in an uncivilised country, he climbs above his comrades by violence and cruelty. The Dey of Algiers was, therefore, well suited to the manners of the country in which he lived. Although a very old man, Bruce found him preparing most vigorously for the siege of Oran: his tent and camp equipage were ready, and he declared it to be his intention to command in person—that, by dying at the siege of Oran, he might merit Paradise*. On the 1st of May, 1763, Bruce wrote to Lord Egremont, to announce his arrival; and the concluding sentence of even this, his first official communication, to use a vulgar expression, “smells strongly of the shop,” or rather of the shambles, which he was doomed to inhabit:—“I have nothing further to trouble your Lordship with,” says the new consul, “at present, only that the late Aga was strangled a very few days ago by order of the Dey, and that Amor Rais, late ambassador in England, has been deprived of his employment here as captain of the port, and is gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca.”

Shortly afterwards, the prime minister, who had been expected to succeed the Dey, was arrested in his presence and instantly strangled: all his relations, and even his friends, were then privately put to

* Bruce's official letters from Algiers (preserved in the Colonial Office) give such a correct and extraordinary picture of that barbarous government, and of the singular situation in which he was placed there, that we have great pleasure in being permitted to lay some of them correctly before the public.

death, in order to stifle any inclination they might feel to complain of the murder of this personage. Not long after, the French consul hesitated to comply with some orders he had received from the Dey, who immediately loaded him with chains, and threatened to have him harnessed to the stone-carts!

On the appointment of every new consul at Algiers, it had always been customary that he should bring with him a present, which is generally supposed in England to be delivered to the Dey himself; but this is not the case. It is distributed amongst all the public officers, who consider it as a right they are entitled to demand, rather than as a gift which they are fortunate enough to receive. Bruce's present consisted principally of blue cloth, his distribution of which gives an odd picture of rank at Algiers, which seems to be what we should term "High Life below Stairs"—for the Dey's "chief cook" shared equally with the "Dey's brother," his "chamberlain," his "ambassador to the Ottoman Porte," and his "two principal secretaries"—each of whom received eleven yards of cloth; the Dey's "second cook," the "admiral," the "first commissioner of the navy," the "captain of the port," and the "master carpenter," each received eight yards; the "captain of marine," the "secretary for prizes," the "comptroller of the Dey's house," and his highness's "barber," claimed four yards. In consequence of a late increase in the number of officers, Bruce's present was not sufficient to satisfy them all; he therefore himself purchased articles to a considerable amount, respecting which he thus wrote to his friend Mr. Wood, the under-secretary of state:—"For my own part, though I hope his Majesty and the secretary of state will consider the circumstances of this expense of mine, so that I may not lose this 213*l.*; yet, if they should not

do it, I shall myself never repent having advanced the money, and lost it, rather than, in my time, his Majesty should lose the affection of this people."

About the year 1757, a vessel bound to Algiers was seized by the Spaniards in Oran, and the Dey had ever since importuned the British government for indemnification for the cargo. Bruce had firmly resisted this claim (which our government also refused to admit), but this placed him in a very difficult situation, and on the 8th of March, 1764, he thus wrote to Lord Halifax:—"I am much importuned for your lordship's answer to the demand of compensation for the cargo belonging to the Algerines, seized on board a British bilander in the port of Oran. They imagine it is owing to my not having wrote, or to my having received the money and not inclining to pay it, that as yet they have obtained no satisfaction. Twenty or thirty of them are concerned in this cargo, and it is all that many of them have in the world. Upon this account, I have already been exposed to very great personal danger from the license of the soldiers, which I should in no way regret, were the occasion honourable, or did it conduce to his Majesty's service."

On the 3rd of June, Bruce again addressed Lord Halifax, to inform him of the situation of affairs, and frankly to explain to him the fatal error that had been committed by the British Government in recalling the late consul, Mr. Aspinall. "The demand of the Moors still continues. I cannot conceal from your lordship that I have been very lately, with little decency, forced to appear before a Turkish judge, to answer whether I would or would not oblige myself personally for the payment of this debt; and it is with very much concern that I acquaint your lordship, that the recall of Mr. Aspinall has had the very worst effect upon British, in particular, and Christian

affairs in general ; the king has declared that he will change consuls every two years ; for which he assigns no reason, though it is plain it is in order to receive presents more frequently ; and he is now assuming the nomination of consuls himself,—having, as he says, begun with the English. He has lately appointed a slave consul for Venice, and has refused the consul the republic sent. He has made a Jew consul of Ragusa ; and, I am told, is soon to change the Dutch likewise. The king is now turned old, and his memory nearly gone : he is altogether guided by one Maltese and one Spanish renegado, who lead him into these measures.”

Bruce proceeds to unfold the horrid private character of the Dey, which we must beg to leave in total darkness. He then proceeds to remind his lordship, that his object in accepting the consulship of Algiers, was to have an opportunity of making drawings of the principal antiquities in that part of Africa ; and he accordingly requests three months' leave of absence in order to visit the interior, with his Majesty's permission, on his return, to resign his situation : he concludes his letter by nobly recommending that Mr. Aspinall should be restored to the consulship of Algiers. During the whole period of Bruce's residence, every leisure moment had been employed in improving his knowledge of the Arabic and Moorish languages. Secluded in his study, he occupied himself in translating some Arabic manuscripts which, with great trouble, he had collected, and his only recreation when abroad was in conversing with the natives. “ My immediate prospect,” he says, “ of setting out on my journey to the inland parts of Africa, had made me double my diligence ; night and day there was no relaxation from these studies.”

In about a month after his last letter, Bruce in-

formed Lord Halifax that he had been to the Dey, to remonstrate with him about an English sailor who was then treated as a slave. "The only answer I could get," says Bruce, "was, '*that when the king paid for his redemption, his Majesty should have him; till when he should continue a slave, though it was till his death.*' This is the tone with which the king now speaks, ever since his successful endeavour in procuring Mr. Aspinall's return, and his putting the French consul in the stone-carts and chains, without consequences; and we have now neither personal nor national privileges, but are treated at discretion. Denmark has agreed to pay constantly, in stores, near 10,000*l.* per annum; Sweden and Holland do the same; and to give me the preference over the others, not less than 2000*l.* yearly is distributed by the other consuls, in jewels and watches, as private presents to the regency; Venice has spent about 20,000*l.* to make peace, and pays 5000*l.* yearly; France, to secure its trade, which amounts to a monopoly of every valuable production of the coast, is always giving and always ill-treated; England, only once in the eight or nine years, upon the change of consuls, gives a scanty present: so that our whole weight must consist in the countenance showed us from home, which they now believe they can prevent by any application from hence; and with this I am constantly threatened if I but speak of grievances ever so gently."

Bruce then repeats his request for permission to quit this troubled scene, and to commence his long-wished for inquiries. But, determined that it should not be thought his object was to shrink from danger, he concludes by saying, "Though, if there is any remonstrance his Majesty directs to be made to this regency, that may interfere with this journey, I

willingly waive it for the sake of his Majesty's service."

This letter was scarcely despatched, when he again addressed Lord Halifax as follows:—"Since I had the honour of writing last to your lordship, that I had been called before a Turkish judge about the demand of Oran, things are come to what I hope is the extremity, though it is difficult to say what is the utmost length these people may go, after their recent behaviour to the French consul. Two days ago, an English ship was sent out of this port by order of the Dey, without any passport indorsed, or without any bill of health or other paper of expedition from the British consulate,—a slave of the king's acting as his Majesty's consul in clearing her out of the port. As his Majesty's commission is thus superseded, it remains with your lordship to consider what remedy is to be applied. I have avoided any explanation further with the king, that no opportunity might be given to say, as in the case of the French consul, that I did not behave with proper respect; and though my first intention, upon receiving this affront, was to leave Algiers, and to return to Mahon, to avoid either ignominy or danger, yet not having his Majesty's leave, and uncertain what turn these people may take concerning our trading vessels, I have resolved to await your lordship's answer in Algiers, rather than desert his Majesty's service. Your lordship is so much better a judge of what is necessary in this case, that it is presumption in me to mention it; only if it be allowed for me to guess by what I have lately seen, all negotiation is but lost time, unless *force* be before their eyes."

A few days afterwards, the English sailor who had been imprisoned by the Dey, appeared before Bruce, hacked, mangled, and covered with bruises. He was

sent to Bruce, by the express order of the Dey, to show, as he said, "that he cared neither for the king of England nor his consul!" Nor were other subjects of complaint wanting, as will appear from the following letter which Bruce addressed to Lord Halifax:—

"On the 18th, war was declared against the emperor; and some Tuscan sailors and passengers arriving unfortunately on board a French vessel, they were dragged from under the French colours, against the law and practice of all nations, and made slaves,—the French consul being too much intimidated, by being put lately in irons, to venture to remonstrate against this affront to their flag. My Lord, in this country of murder, chains, and torture, your lordship will not expect me to be more explicit than I am *as to measures*. I am not certain but that the Doctor* will be stopped, and my letters seized to-morrow. . . . I was just finishing my letter to your lordship, when word is brought to me that, this morning early, the master and supercargo of the above-mentioned vessel were carried before the Dey, and were bastinadoed over the feet and loins in such a manner, that the blood gushed out, and then loaded with heavy chains, the lightest of which weighs a hundred weight. The captain, it is thought, will not live. They are not allowed meat, drink, or clothing, or room to lie in, and subsist wholly on an allowance from me The same day it was proposed to give my vice-consul, Mr. Forbes, a thousand bastinados, to extort from him a confession of the contents of my papers. He has fled to my house for protection, where he continues in great fear, for, being *much affected with the gout*, a very small proportion of the thousand bastinados would kill him, nor could he satisfy them in a single syllable, as I have never, in writing or

* Dr. Ball, the bearer of despatches from Bruce for England.

copying letters to your lordship, used any hand but my own; and it being now, I fear, the time in which some restraint may be put on my liberty, I can no longer venture to preserve even copies, so beg your lordship will pardon the variations of such letters as are intended as duplicates, as the difference will never be very material." It is surely impossible for any one to read the above letter, without being filled with feelings of astonishment that this country, which, like all others, has so often waged war for trifles, or to repel imaginary insults, should ever have submitted to such repeated insults from so petty and barbarous a government as that of Algiers*.

Soon after Bruce's last letter, full of indignation, he again wrote to Lord Halifax, recommending, in the strongest terms, force, as the only way of maintaining the dignity of this country at Algiers; and fearing lest his advice on so important a measure should be questioned, he refers Lord Halifax to several individuals in England who knew him, "and who," he says, "will, I hope, fully satisfy your lordship that I am incapable of representing anything in a false or aggravated light." After thus boldly recommending forcible measures, which would have been so highly dangerous to his own personal security, he adds: "I myself have received from a friend some private intimations to consult my own safety and escape. The advice is impracticable, nor would I take it were it not so. Your lordship may depend upon it, that, till I have the king's orders, or find

* About the time of writing the above (in the year 1830), Algiers was attacked and captured by the French. Whether they will retain the acquisition then made, or, in renouncing it, take measures in concert with other nations to prevent its again becoming a repair for pirates, remains to be seen.—Ed.

that I can be of no further service here, nothing will make me leave Algiers but force. One brother has already, this war, had the honour to lose his life in the service of his country. Two others, besides myself, are still in it, and if any accident should happen to me, as is most probable from these *lawless butchers*, all I beg of his Majesty is, that he will graciously please to extend his favour to the survivors, if deserving, and that he will make this city an example to others, how they violate public faith, and the law of nations."

In order fairly to appreciate the disinterested firmness of the above letter, it should be remembered that Bruce was remaining at Algiers against his will, and that he had long ago repeatedly applied for his Majesty's permission to resign the consulship.

A violent dispute now took place between Bruce and the Dey about passports. On the taking of Minorca by the French, a number of English passports fell into the hands of the enemy, and the French governor, naturally wishing to embroil us in disputes with the Barbary States, filled up the blanks of these English passports, and then sold them to Spaniards, Neapolitans, and other enemies of the Barbary regencies. As soon as this fraud was detected, the British governors of Gibraltar and Mahon furnished our ships with written certificates, which they imprudently termed *Passavants*; but these pirates not being able to read them, and observing that they differed in shape and form from the old printed passports, inveighed against the supposed duplicity of the English, and importuned their master the Dey to order every ship to be seized which carried a passavant. Bruce opposed this counsel with steady resolution, but the old Dey

holding several passavans in his hand, answered him with great emotion in these very memorable terms: "The British government knows that we can neither read nor write—no, not even our own language. We are ignorant soldiers and sailors—robbers, if you will, though we do not wish to rob you. War is our trade, and we live by that only. Tell me how my cruisers are to know all these different writings and seals?"

Bruce, neither intimidated nor convinced by the savage eloquence of the Dey, again remonstrated; upon which he was disowned as consul, his dragoman was taken from him, and he was ordered to quit the country in three days. "In reply," says Bruce, "I begged the Dey to excuse me if I considered myself still as British consul, and if I denied it to be in the power of any foreign prince to annul my commission." An English ship, happening to arrive about this time with a passavant, was broken to pieces, and the crew hurried into slavery. Bruce prepared to embark, but the storm suddenly subsided. The unruly passions of the Dey, though deaf to reason, had listened to the subtle admonitions of his officers, who explained to him the ruinous consequences of a war with England. Regular printed passports arrived, and "thus ended," says Bruce, "an affair the least pleasing, the least profitable, and one of the most dangerous in which I was ever engaged."

In communicating intelligence of his own dismissal, and of the above proceedings of the Dey to Lord Halifax, Bruce again recommended that the remedy of force, that actual cautery, should be applied; and always ready to share in every service of danger which he conceived it his duty to propose, he offered to return with any expedition against the place. "I shall always esteem it," he says, "an

honour to venture my life in his Majesty's service, without rank or reward, in the station he shall be pleased to employ me."

A considerable time elapsed before Bruce received from England any reply to his communications from Algiers, and but little notice was taken of the request which he had so repeatedly made for leave of absence to visit Tunis and the interior. In the months of November and December, 1764, he thus addressed Lord Halifax:—

November 3rd.—“ I take the liberty, my Lord, to offer your lordship my most humble thanks for having laid my request of leave to resign this consulship before the king. Very disagreeable and dangerous as my situation is, if his Majesty or your lordship think that it is more for the advantage of the service that I should remain till these disputes are settled, rather than that they should be taken up by my successor, I am entirely at his Majesty's disposal, only I hope that some resolution may be speedily taken, for the safety of commerce and of the king's servants. I beg leave to remind your lordship of my request, that before my resignation I might have permission to visit Tunis and some other places in the inland country. My absence will not exceed three months, and his Majesty's affairs here will be perfectly safe and well conducted during that time by Mr. Forbes, my vice-consul.”

November 29th.—“ I beg leave to remind your lordship of my frequently repeated request for three months' leave of absence before I resign this consulship, to make a small journey into this continent. As I have been at great pains and expense in preparing for it, and have done all in my power to deserve this no considerable favour, I have too great an opinion of your lordship's goodness to think I

can be refused. As in this journey I hope to make two very considerable collections of drawings, I propose offering the first to his Majesty as a token of my duty, and shall take it as a very great honour if your lordship will allow me to make use of your lordship's protection for the second."

Again, on the 14th of December, he thus acknowledges the receipt of an order to await the arrival of a consul who had been at last appointed to succeed him:—"I should have been much obliged to your lordship if it had been thought proper to have procured me permission to have made the proposed journey to Tunis, as I requested in several letters; but, as I have not had any return, and as it would be impossible without the protection of the king's commission to make it with any effect, I submit. My lord, in disputes with these regencies, it has almost uniformly been the practice to join his Majesty's consul in the commission for adjusting these differences. Excuse me, my lord, if I, with all possible humility, observe, that the contrary now, and the immediate arrival of a successor, has in my case every appearance of disgrace, which I cannot but feel sensibly, after having in so disagreeable and dangerous a conjuncture done everything possible to protect his Majesty's commerce, and maintain the character of my commission."

In justice to the memory of Lord Halifax, it is proper to give his sensible reply to the latter part of Bruce's letter:—"With regard to the appearance of disgrace which you are apprehensive the arrival of a successor at such a juncture may carry, you have the satisfaction to know that your conduct has been honoured with his Majesty's approbation, and that it was in consequence of your repeated desires

to resign and return home, that another consul has been appointed in your stead."

Previous to the arrival of Bruce's successor, the Dey caused a letter to be written to his Britannic Majesty, to complain that a party of Algerine soldiers had been captured off Gibraltar by the Spaniards, in consequence of secret intelligence of their approach having been given to the Spanish commander by the British garrison. The above statement is absolutely necessary to explain the following translation of a most curious long-winded letter which was submitted by the Dey to his Majesty.

" MUSTAPHA HAN.



ALLY,
Son of
Mahomet,
God protect
him.

" The help of the helpers and guard of kings, mighty king, the most merciful, with the help of God at Mecca—commander of the whole Mahometans under God! God preserve the king!

" King of land and sea—king, son of king, the king of mercy, Mustapha Han, may God maintain his glory and his kingdom for ever—Sovereign Lord of my country, also of the west! Ally Bacha, God fulfil his desires, to his most sacred Majesty king George the third—God grant him long life and *our love*.

" King, defender of Christian faith, king of England, France, and Ireland, our beloved great and noble friend whom God prosper, may God direct you to do good to me, and may you enjoy your crown for ever, and our friendship for ever, amen—with the spirit of God Jesus the son of Mary, amen.

“The love and friendship, I continue: now what I beg from your Majesty in the name of God the most mighty, always in mutual friendship, and pray God to continue our friendship till death, which that’s certain.

“Now, I beg your Majesty will listen to what I am going to say without fail. My great beloved friend, the foundation of this letter is Athebeck, from my dominions with a parcel of soldiers when they came below Gibraltar the people in the garrison gave notice to the Spaniards, and they took ’em, and this treachery cannot subsist between us. Now, I beg your Majesty will do us justice, and pray God preserve your Majesty, and may our friendship continue for ever. Amen.

“Allgier,
Ally Basha,
the 22d of month
Ramazan, in the year
1178, Dettusura.”

(Which corresponds with the
16th of March, 1765.)

As soon as it was known that a consul was coming from England to succeed Bruce, the effect was produced which he had apprehended; for every one pretended to consider that it was in consequence of the king of England’s disapprobation of his conduct. Bruce was therefore treated with great indignity. The cruelties of the Dey seemed to increase with his age. In one morning, seventeen Turks were seized and strangled in his presence; he even condemned to death his own brother; and, for every trifling complaint brought before him, he prescribed King Richard’s remedy of “Off with his head!”

At last the new British consul arrived, accompanied by Captain Cleveland of the navy. This consul was shortly afterwards recalled; and in less than two years two others succeeded to this dangerous

post. One of these gentlemen, on sailing from England, was recommended, by our government, to do everything in his power to conciliate the troublesome affairs of Algiers. His obsequious, courtier-like conduct forms a striking contrast to Bruce's firm, manly behaviour; and he was very shortly recalled for over-acting his part of conciliation, by allowing the Dey to impose a tax on our vessels, which he had no right whatever to demand.

In the following letter this gentleman thus informs Lord Halifax of the death of the Dey: "I have now the mortification to acquaint you of the death of his Excellency *the good old Dey*, Alli Bashaw, who was seized with a violent cold and pleuritic complaint the 24th past. He continued in a declining way till Sunday the 2nd inst., when he expired between one and two o'clock in the morning, aged seventy, after having reigned eleven years and forty days. The divan was immediately assembled, and about seven the hamagee or treasurer was chosen to succeed him. The colours were then hoisted at the palace, the garrison, and harbour, as also at the several forts, with a discharge of cannon. At eight I paid my respects to the new Dey, Mahomet Bashaw, and was well received. About nine the old Dey was carried out to be interred, and all was quiet."

In this whining requiem, which one of Bruce's successors, a British consul, sings over the carcass of that old sanguinary tyrant, Alli Bashaw, the Dey of Algiers, the reader will probably start at the appellation of the "*good old Dey*:" yet the consul's letter is unfortunately but a specimen of those diplomatic reports which, from distant countries, are too often made to coincide with the supposed views and fancies of the minister at home; for however barbarous foreign governments may be, however poor, weak,

and ignorant may be their rulers, however lawless and uncivilised may be the people, yet, if the minister of the day has poetically imagined that it would be a fine thing "to call this new world into existence," it is melancholy to observe with what affected formality the rude cacique is diplomatically described as "his excellency the governor," and his rough, illiterate clerk as "the minister secretary of state for foreign affairs." It is true that honest time at last corrects the picture, corrodes its varnish, and destroys its paint; but in the meanwhile this country always suffers by the illusion, and, by sad experience, at last purchases truth at more than her weight in gold.

The long intervals which had elapsed between the letters that Bruce had addressed to Lord Halifax, he regularly devoted to study, in making himself familiar with everything that could be necessary for his intended journey. A Greek priest, a native of Cyprus, had attached himself to Bruce on his first arrival in Algiers. From this venerable man he acquired a knowledge of the modern Greek, which was of the greatest assistance to him in Abyssinia; and the reader will soon learn what essential service this priest rendered to Bruce when he afterwards met with him in Egypt. From Mr. Ball, the king's surgeon at Algiers, he also acquired professional information of the most valuable description, and which afterwards became his passport in all the countries which he visited.

In this manner did Bruce pass his time at Algiers, deliberately preparing himself for the great discovery which was the ultimate object of his ambition. His paltry disputes with the Dey, and the neglect which attended his repeated applications to England for permission to commence his journey, would have

engrossed the whole attention of most people, and would have distracted, with petty distress, the minds of many: but neither these, nor the enervating effects of the African climate, could shake the unalterable determination of his character; and after having been detained at Algiers for two years and a quarter, he was no sooner relieved by Captain Cleveland, than he immediately prepared for his departure. Accordingly, on the 25th of August, 1765, he sailed from Algiers, his mind filled with the most agreeable ideas, and rejoicing to run his gigantic course.



Sketch of the
Princes' (Trabels),
by Barbary & Spain.

at
Bar
Geograph
20

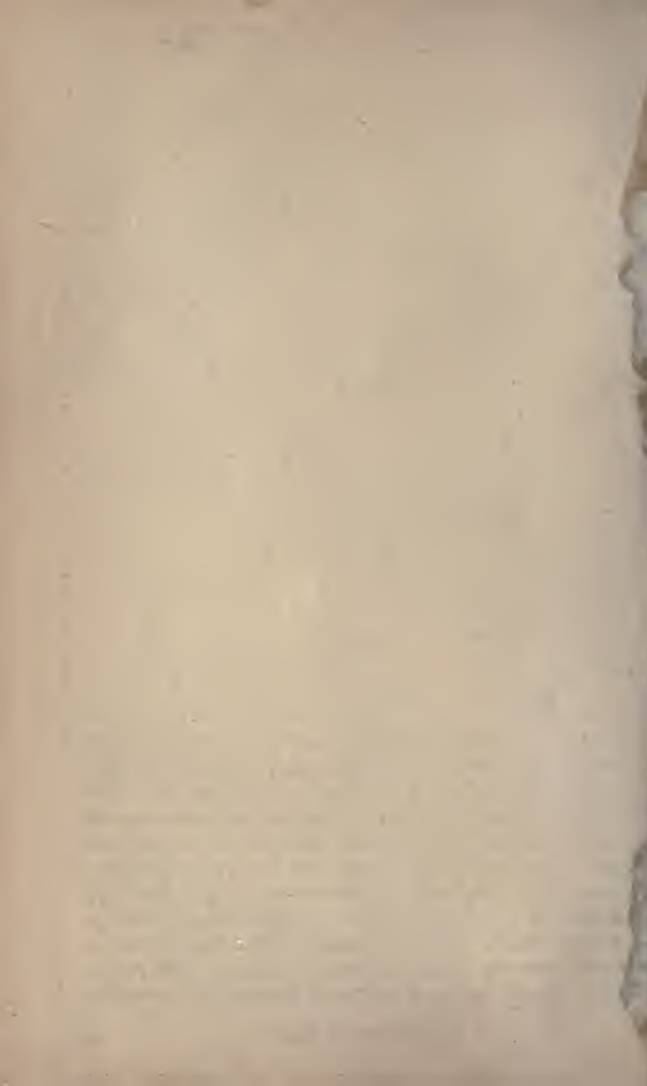
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5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40



CHAPTER III.

Bruce travels through the kingdoms of Tunis and Tripoli—Is wrecked—Beaten by the Arabs—Sails to Crete, Rhodes, Asia Minor, and Syria—Visits Palmyra and Baalbec—Is detained at Cyprus—Sails for Egypt.

THE Dey, secretly admiring the firmness and integrity of Bruce's character, had furnished him with recommendatory letters to the Beys of Tunis and Tripoli,—states independent of the Dey of Algiers, but over which the circumstances of the times had given him considerable influence. Sailing along the African coast, Bruce landed at Bona, the ancient Aphrodisium, and anchoring at Biserta, he paid a visit to Utica, as he says, "out of respect to the memory of Cato." He then landed at Tunis, and delivering his letters to the Bey, he obtained permission to visit the country in whatever direction he should please. From the French and English consuls he received great attention and assistance; and about the middle of September, while the weather was still dreadfully hot, he set out for the interior of the kingdoms of Algiers and Tunis, accompanied by his draftsman, Luigi Balugani, a French renegado named Osman, and ten spahis or foot soldiers, "who," says Bruce, "were well armed with firelocks and pistols, excellent horsemen, and, as far as I could ever discern, as eminent for cowardice, at least, as they were for horsemanship." On reaching Tucca, he found a Corinthian pillar of Parian marble and the ruins of a temple, among which he remained

fifteen days, making various most valuable drawings, which we are sorry to say still remain unpublished.

After visiting several other places, he came to Hydra, the Thunodrunum of the ancients, the frontier of the two kingdoms of Algiers and Tunis, and inhabited by a tribe of Arabs called Welled Sidi Boogannim. These Arabs were immensely rich, paying no tribute either to Algiers or Tunis,—the pretence for this exemption being a very singular one. By the institution of their founder, they are obliged to live upon lions' flesh, and thus eating up the enemies of the state, they are not taxed like the other Arabs. Seated among these wild people, Bruce openly partook of their fare, and having done so, he acknowledged it in words which are highly characteristic of himself:—

“Before Dr. Shaw's travels first acquired the celebrity they have maintained ever since, there was a circumstance that very nearly ruined their credit. He had ventured to say in conversation, that these Welled Sidi Boogannim were eaters of lions; and this was considered at Oxford, the university where he had studied, as a traveller's license on the part of the doctor. They thought it a subversion of the natural order of things that a man should eat a lion, when it had long passed as almost the peculiar province of the lion to eat man. The doctor flinched under the sagacity and severity of this criticism: he could not deny that the Welled Sidi Boogannim did eat lions, as he had repeatedly said; but he had not yet published his travels, and therefore left it out of his narrative, and only hinted at it in his appendix.

“With all submission to that learned university, I will not dispute the lion's title to eating men; but since it is not founded upon patent, no consideration will make me stifle the merit of the Welled Sidi

Boogannim, who have turned the chase upon the enemy. It is an historical fact; and I will not suffer the public to be misled by a misrepresentation of it: on the contrary, I do aver, in the face of these fantastic prejudices, that I have eat the flesh of lions, that is, part of three lions, in the tents of the Welled Sidi Boogannim."—If the spirit of these noble animals had entered Bruce's heart instead of his stomach, he could not have expressed himself in bolder terms!

From Hydra he went to the ancient Tipasa, where he found a most extensive scene of ruins; and then entering the eastern province of Algiers, he reached Medrashem, a superb pile of building. Passing Gibel Aurex and Cassareen, the ancient Colonia Scillitana, he at last reached Spaitla, in the kingdom of Tunis. The Welled Omran, a lawless, plundering tribe, disturbed Bruce very much during the eight days which he occupied in minutely measuring and drawing the extensive and elegant ruins of Spaitla. "It was a fair match," he says, "between coward and coward. With my company I was enclosed in a square, in which the three temples stood, where there yet remained a precinct of high walls. These plunderers would have come in to me, but were afraid of my fire-arms; and I would have run away from them, had I not been afraid of meeting their horse in the plain. I was almost starved to death, when I was relieved by the arrival of Welled Hassan, and a friendly tribe of Dreedra, that came to my assistance, and brought me at once both safety and provision."

From Spaitla he proceeded to Muchtar, and Musti, and then returning to Tugga, he went down the Bagrada to Tunis. From Tunis he again went to Spaitla, where he remained five days more, correcting and revising the drawings and memoranda which he

had already made there. Passing Feriani, he came to a large lake, the Palus Tritonidis, now called the Lake of Marks, because there is in it a row of large trunks of palm trees set up to guide travellers across it. "This was," says Bruce, "the most barren and unpleasant part of my journey in Africa: barren, not only from the nature of the soil, but by its having no remains of antiquity in the whole course of it." This desert scene was at last most agreeably and suddenly changed, by the small river Triton, the water of which caused the adjacent country to be covered with all kinds of flowers and verdure. Bruce had now reached the Lesser Syrtis. He here turned to visit El Gemme, where there had been a large and perfect amphitheatre, until Mahomet Bey blew up a part of it, to prevent its being occupied as a fortress by the Arabs. Continuing along the coast to Susa, Bruce once more arrived at Tunis, possessing drawings of what he considered "to be all the antiquities worth notice in the territories of Tunis and Algiers."

Notwithstanding the great heat of the sun to which he had been subjected, his health was good, and he had hitherto met with no accident whatever: but he had now a very serious undertaking to perform, which was to cross the desert to Tripoli; and the Bey of Tunis being at enmity with the Basha of Tripoli, could give him no letters of introduction. He accordingly took leave of the Bey, and proceeded to Gerba, the island of the Lotophagi, where the Bey of Tunis, with his usual munificence, had prepared for him a house, with every sort of refreshment.

On this coast, there is no sort of fruit whatever—no bush, no tree, nor verdure of any kind, excepting the short grass that separates this country

from the moving sands of the desert. About four days' journey from Tripoli, Bruce met the Emir Hadji, conducting a caravan of pilgrims from Fez, in Morocco, across the whole of Africa to Mecca—that is, from the Atlantic ocean to the western banks of the Red Sea. The caravan consisted of about three thousand men, with an immense number of camels, laden with merchandise, water, flour, and food, for the hadjis or pilgrims; and such a crowd of uncivilised beings, wildly traversing such a vast inhospitable desert, yet urged forward and supported by a principle of religion, formed a very extraordinary spectacle. They had scarcely passed, when Bruce and his little party were assailed by a number of Arab horsemen, whom they repulsed with considerable difficulty, and with a loss of four men.

On arriving at Tripoli, Bruce was received by his countryman, the British consul, (the Hon. Mr. Fraser of Lovat,) with that kindness and attention which he much needed, after so rude a journey, made with such diligence, that two of his horses had died from fatigue; but as the Basha was unfortunately at variance with Mr. Fraser, Bruce was much disappointed at learning that it would be absolutely necessary for him to return by the coast of the Lesser Syrtis to Tunis, to reside there, until Mr. Harrison, who was appointed by government to settle the differences with the Barbary states, should solicit permission for him to travel through the dominions of Tripoli.

To Tunis, therefore, Bruce returned, and remained there till August, 1766, when this permission reaching him, he again crossed the desert, by Sfax and Gerba, to Tripoli, where he was hospitably received by the French, Venetian, and British consuls. From Tripoli he despatched an English

servant to Smyrna, with his books, drawings, and supernumerary instruments, having torn from his books those pages which he conceived might be of service in the Pentapolis, or other parts of the Cyrenaicum, and by these precautions he most fortunately saved the greatest part of his labours in Africa. He then crossed the Gulf of Sidra, formerly known by the name of Syrtis Major, and arrived at Bengazi, the ancient Berenice, built by Ptolemy Philadelphus.

The brother of the Bey of Tripoli commanded here; a young man, weak in understanding and in health. For more than a year, Bengazi had been suffering from severe famine; many people died from starvation every day, and some of the living were actually hovering round the corpses of the dead for food which human nature shudders to reflect on. Bruce at once fled from this dreadful scene. Travelling over a great part of the Pentapolis, he visited the ruins of Arsinoë, and Ras Sem, and then approaching the sea-coast, came to Ptolemeta, the ancient Ptolemais, the walls and gate of which he found still entire.

Here he was informed that the Welled Ali-Arabs had plundered the Morocco caravan, which he had met in the desert; that the pilgrims had been left to perish for want of water; that there was a famine at Derna, the neighbouring town to which he had intended to proceed; that the plague had also appeared, and that the town was engaged in a civil war. This torrent of bad news was irresistible; and Bruce at once resolved to fly from this inhospitable coast, and save for the public that knowledge and information which he had so resolutely and painfully acquired. Accordingly, with his little party, he embarked on board a small Greek vessel, bound for

Lampedoza, but the destination of which the master had agreed to change to Crete. The vessel was badly appointed; and, when it was too late, Bruce found that although it had plenty of sail, it carried not an ounce of ballast. A number of half-famished men, women, and children, anxious to fly from the dreadful fate which awaited them, crowded on board; but the passage was short, the vessel light, and the master, as Bruce supposed, well-accustomed to these seas. At day-break the next day they sailed; and it was then discovered that the captain was perfectly ignorant of his duty, and that he was actually unable to govern his ship*. A violent storm overtook them, and the vessel falling to leeward, struck on a rock near the entrance of the harbour of Bengazi: fortunately the wind suddenly lulled, and Roger M'Cormack, Bruce's Irish servant, (who had been once a sailor in the British service,) lowered the largest boat, into which he, Bruce, and a multitude of people, instantly jumped. Fearing that they would be swamped, they pushed off from the ship, and with two oars they endeavoured to row the boat ashore. Bruce had thrown off all his clothes, excepting a short under waistcoat and his linen

* Some years ago, the writer of this volume, having been sent to make a trigonometrical survey of the uninhabited island of Lampedoza, embarked for Tripoli, on board a small Greek vessel, exactly similar to the one described by Bruce. The master, as is usual in the Mediterranean, had no instrument for determining his situation but a board, a piece of string, and three small pins, which were to be placed in particular situations, that no one on board understood but himself; however, his hand and head shook so violently, from the effects of liquor, that for more than a day the vessel was beating about completely lost. In the middle of the second night, a horse, which was standing on deck, smelling the island of Malta, began to neigh most violently; and, accordingly the land, which was announced by this animal to his fellow-passengers, appeared in sight at day-break.

drawers ; a silk sash or girdle was wrapt round him ; a pencil, pocket-book, and watch, were in the breast-pocket of his waistcoat : two Moorish and two of his English servants accompanied him—the rest of his party had remained on board. They had scarcely got a boat's length from the ship, when a wave nearly swamped them, and a shriek of despair announced their helpless situation. The next wave was approaching evidently to overwhelm them, and Bruce, fearing that some woman, child, or helpless man would cling upon him, entangle him, and thus ignominiously drag him, like a culprit, into eternity, resolved at least to make an effort to save himself, and, exclaiming to his servants, both in Arabic and English, " We are lost ! If you can swim, follow me ! " he jumped overboard.

In moments of real danger, there is nothing which more distinguishes a man than the simple act of doing *something*—for the general effect of fear is to paralyse the mind, as well as the body, and men under this base feeling do *nothing*. Bruce at first allowed himself to go to leeward, in order to get clear of the boat. A strong, practised swimmer, in the vigour of life, full of health, and accustomed to exertion and fatigue of every description, he got on very well as long as he was in deep water, but as soon as he came to the surf, he received a blow on his breast from the eddy wave, which threw him upon his back, made him swallow a quantity of water, and nearly suffocated him. The next wave left him almost breathless and exhausted. At last, finding his hands and knees on the sand, he fixed his nails into it, and desperately maintaining his hold until the sea for a moment retired, he managed to crawl forwards a few feet : perfectly exhausted, he then fainted away, and remained for a considerable

time insensible to the waves which, one after another, were eagerly rolling towards the shore, as if greedily desirous to regain their prey.

At this critical moment, the Arabs, who were but two short miles from the shore, came down in crowds to plunder the vessel, all the people from which were now taken on shore, and those only lost who had perished in the boat. Bruce was first awakened from his trance by a blow with the butt end of a lance on the back of his neck, but it was merely accident that it had not been the point, for his short waistcoat, which had been purchased at Algiers, and his sash and drawers cut in the Turkish fashion, made the Arabs believe that he was a Turk; and, after many hard blows, kicks, and curses, they stript their defenceless and exhausted victim, leaving him as naked as their barren shore. After treating the rest of the passengers and crew in the same manner, they sought to plunder the bodies of those who had been drowned. In the mean while, Bruce walked, or rather crawled, to some white sandy hillocks, where he sat down and concealed himself as well as he could, for he knew that if he approached the tents where the women were, while he was naked, he would receive bastinadoes considerably heavier than the last. Smarting from the discipline he had already undergone, it suddenly occurred to him, that by the gibberish in imitation of Turkish which the Arabs had uttered to him while they were beating and stripping him, they had taken him for a Turk, and had treated him accordingly. At this moment an old Arab, attended by several young men, came up to him. He offered them the salute of "Salum Alicum," with which at first they were offended, asking him, what, as a Turk, he had to do there? Bruce very readily replied, that he was no Turk,

but a poor Christian physician, a dervish, that went about the world seeking to do good for God's sake : that when he was wrecked he was flying from famine, and was going to Greece to get bread. A ragged, dirty baracan was immediately thrown over him, and he was conducted to a tent, through the end of which appeared a long spear, which is the mark of sovereignty. The Shiekh of the tribe being at peace with the Bey of Bengazi, asked Bruce many questions, and at last ordered him a plentiful supper, at which he had the happiness of meeting his attendants. Camels were then brought, and the whole party proceeded to Bengazi, from whence Bruce wrote to the Sheikh, to entreat him to endeavour to fish up his cases, for which he offered a handsome reward ; but this was not effected, and he lost a sextant, telescope, timepiece, a small camera obscura, some guns, pistols, several drawings, and many of his notes and observations.

At Bengazi he fortunately met with a small French sloop, the master of which so gratefully remembered that Bruce had rendered him a trifling service at Algiers, that he generously offered even to lend him money.

After having been detained at Bengazi about two months, during which time he and his party had little to subsist on but fish, which they themselves caught, they sailed in the French sloop from the bay ; and bidding farewell to the coast of Africa, they landed at Canea, a small fortress at the west end of the island of Crete.

The beating which Bruce had received at Bengazi left marks, which, after a considerable time, totally disappeared ; but the relentless ague, which, in consequence of his exertions in the sea of Ptolemeta, fixed itself on his constitution, persecuted him through all his travels, suddenly appearing and oppressing him

in moments of his severest difficulties. He was first seized with this disorder at Crete, where he remained for some days dangerously ill.

From Canea he sailed to Rhodes, where, with very great pleasure, he found his books. He then proceeded to Castelrosso, on the coast of Caramania, in Asia Minor, where he had been credibly informed there were very magnificent ruins, but his fever increasing, he found it impossible to prosecute this undertaking: he was therefore reluctantly obliged to abandon it, and, proceeding again to sea, he landed on the continent of Asia, at Beiroot, near Sidon, on the coast of Phœnicia, in June, 1767.

Bruce was now in a very weak state of health; he possessed drawings and notes which would have offered to most men alluring and tranquil occupations,—he had undergone fatigues which faithfully and frankly warned him to give rest to his constitution. A new quarter of the world was now before him—new in its dangers, its history, and its inhabitants; but

“ *Cœlum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt;* ”

the enterprising spirit of Bruce remained unaltered; and careless of his shattered frame, he now resolved, that previous to undertaking his daring attempt to reach the source of the Nile, he would endeavour, as he said, “ to add the ruins of Palmyra to those of Africa ! ”

There are two tribes almost equally powerful who inhabit the deserts round Palmyra: the one is the Anneci, remarkable for the breed of their horses; the other is the Mowulli, who are excellent soldiers. These two tribes were not at war, nor were they at peace; they were only upon what is termed ill terms with each other—a very dangerous time for strangers to have any dealings with either. Bruce would have

gone at once from Sidon to Baalbec, but it was then besieged by the Druses of Mount Libanus. He therefore went to Tripoli in Syria, and from thence set out for Aleppo, but, suddenly sinking under his Bengazi ague, he was just able to reach the house of M. Belville, a French merchant, to whom he was addressed for credit; and Bruce always declared, "that, had it not been for his friendly attention, and the skill and anxiety of Dr. Russel, physician to the British factory, it is probable his travels would have ended at Aleppo."

As soon as he was restored to health, his first object was his journey to Palmyra. Stopping at two miserable huts inhabited by a base set called Turcomans, he asked the master of one of them to show him a ford, which the man, apparently, very kindly undertook to do, although the river, the Orontes, was so violent, that he felt more than once an inclination to turn back. However, suspecting nothing, he proceeded according to the directions of his guide, when, all of a sudden, he and his horse fell into such deep water, that each swam separately ashore; and when Bruce went to dry himself at a caphar or turnpike, the man told him that the place at which he had attempted to cross was an old bridge, one arch of which had long ago been carried away; that he had consequently fallen into the very deepest part of the river; and that the people who had misguided him were an infamous banditti. From Hassia, Bruce and his party went to Cariateen, when, to their great surprise, they found about two thousand of the Anneci encamped; they were treated with civility, and passed the desert between Cariateen and Palmyra in a day and two nights, constantly proceeding without sleeping.

Weary and exhausted, they ascended a hill of white gritty stone, hemmed in by a narrow winding

road, but when they reached the summit, "there opened before us," says Bruce, "the most astonishing, stupendous sight that perhaps ever appeared to mortal eyes. The whole plain below, which was very extensive, was covered so thick with magnificent buildings, that one seemed to touch the other,—all of fine proportions,—all of agreeable forms,—all composed of white stones, which, at that distance, appeared like marble. At the end of it stood the palace of the sun, a building worthy to close so magnificent a scene."

Between the human mind and the body there is that sympathetic union, that the one always shares its prosperity with the other, and Bruce, both enraptured and refreshed with the scene before him, only thought how he could copy it to the greatest advantage. He therefore, assisted by Balugani, divided Palmyra into six angular views, bringing into the foreground of each some edifice or group of columns particularly worthy of delineation. These views were drawn upon very large paper, and on so large a scale, that the columns in some of them were a foot long, and several of the figures in the foreground of the temple of the sun nearly four inches in height. Having finished thirteen of these large drawings, he and his party quitted Palmyra, and travelled about one hundred and thirty miles to Baalbec, the interior of the great temple of which surpassed, in Bruce's opinion, anything he had even seen at Palmyra. Having taken a number of views, he proceeded by Tyre; and, as he says, "much fatigued, but satisfied beyond measure with what I had seen,—I arrived in perfect health, and in the gayest humour possible, at the hospitable mansion of M. Clerambaut, at Sidon."

He there found letters from Europe in reply to those which he had written, announcing the loss of his instruments at Bengazi. From his friend, Dr. Russel,

at London, he learned that a reflecting telescope, as also an achromatic one by Dolland, had been forwarded to him—from Paris he received a timepiece and a stop-watch—and from Louis XV., who had heard from the Count de Buffon of Bruce's misfortune at Bengazi, he had the honour of receiving a quadrant, which had belonged to the Military Academy at Marseilles. Flattered at the support he had thus received, and delighted with the acquisition of these instruments, he resolved no longer to delay his voyage to Egypt, particularly as three years had already elapsed since he quitted Algiers; accordingly, on the 15th of June, 1768, he sailed from Sidon for Alexandria. The vessel touched at Cyprus; but, occupied with his immense undertaking, Bruce naturally says of this island—"I had no curiosity to see it. My mind was intent upon more uncommon, more distant, and more painful voyages. But the master of the vessel had business of his own which led him thither: with this I the more readily complied, as we had not yet got certain advice that the plague had ceased in Egypt; and it still wanted some days to the festival of St. John, which is supposed to put an end to that cruel distemper*."

Thus detained at Cyprus, Bruce's thoughts and dreams were enthusiastically filled with the distant object of his ambition; and as Mahomet is said to have once walked to the mountain because it declined to visit him, so did Bruce indulge himself with the contrary idea, that he saw the waters of the Nile

* During the plague at Malta, the writer of this volume often heard the Maltese predict, many months before the festival of St. John, that the disorder would cease by that day, and so in fact it did. The Maltese priests, of course, declared that St. John had killed it; but the English doctors, with greater reason, attributed its departure to excessive heat, which, as well as excess of cold, has generally been observed to arrest the contagion.

flying towards him in the heavens of Cyprus. "We observed," he says, "a number of thin white clouds moving with great rapidity from south to north, in direct opposition to the course of the Etesian winds; these were immensely high. It was evident they came from the mountains of Abyssinia, where, having discharged their weight of rain, and being pressed by the lower current of heavier air from the northward, they had mounted to possess the vacuum, and returned to restore the equilibrium to the northward, whence they were to come back, loaded with vapour from Mount Taurus, to occasion the overflowing of the Nile, by breaking against the high and rugged mountains of the south. Nothing could be more agreeable to me than that sight, and the reasoning upon it. I already with pleasure anticipated the time in which I should be a spectator first, afterwards an historian of this phenomenon, hitherto a mystery through all ages: I exulted in the measures I had taken!"

These and many similar enthusiastic exclamations have severely brought upon Bruce the cold, unfeeling, sarcastic sneer of the critic. In the quiet occupations of civilised, domestic, and fashionable life, it is unusual, and it is always termed "vulgar," to act by or speak from, the first dictates of the heart, yet, on all dangerous services, these are absolutely necessary to propel; the heart, that weak engine of life, requires, for extra work, more coals; and if, under trying circumstances, men are to be denied the natural excitement of their feelings, how are ships to be boarded—how are breaches to be mounted—how is the African traveller to be urged forward on his course? When Captain Parry left this country, on the coldest and most cheerless expedition that man ever undertook, he sailed from us, enthusiastically hoping "that he might fix the British flag on the north-pole of the earth!"—"A peerage or Westminster Abbey!" exclaimed

Nelson, as he rushed forward with his men to board the San Josef. Let the cynic sit in his tub, the moralist in his chair, and let the critic reign in his garret, "the monarch of all he surveys"—the sunshine of the one, and the speculation of the others, are pleasures which they have long peacefully enjoyed; but they surely ought not to interfere with the real difficulties of life, or coldly to ridicule those eager feelings without which such difficulties positively could not be surmounted.

But Bruce has already sailed from Cyprus, and previous to the first introduction to the waters of the Nile, it may not be improper, for one moment, calmly and dispassionately to consider how far he was qualified for the attempt which he was about to undertake. Being thirty-eight years of age, he was at that period of life in which both the mind and body of man are capable of their greatest possible exertions. During his travels and residence in Europe, Africa, and Asia, he had become practically acquainted with the religion, manners, and prejudices of many countries different from his own; and he had learned to speak the French, Italian, Spanish, modern Greek, Moorish, and Arabic languages. Full of enterprise, enthusiastically devoted to the object he had in view, accustomed to hardship, inured to climate as well as to fatigue, he was a man of undoubted courage, in stature six feet four, and with this imposing appearance, possessing great personal strength; and, lastly, in every proper sense of the word, he was a gentleman; and no man about to travel, can give to his country a better pledge for veracity, than when, like Bruce, his mind is ever retrospectively viewing the noble conduct of his ancestors—thus showing that he considers he has a stake in society, which, by the meanness of falsehood or exaggeration, he would be unable to transmit unsullied to his posterity.

CHAPTER IV.

Bruce arrives at Cairo—Has very singular Interviews with the Bey—Sails up the Nile—Gains a promise of Protection from the Arabs Ababbé—Visits the Sepulchres of Thebes—Reaches the Cataract of Syene—Descends the Nile to Keffe.

It was in the beginning of July, in the year 1768, that Bruce arrived at Cairo, recommended to the very hospitable house of Julian and Bertram, to whom he imparted his resolution of pursuing his journey into Abyssinia. The wildness of the intention seemed to strike them greatly, and they did all in their power to dissuade him against it; but seeing that he was resolved, they then kindly offered him every possible assistance.

As the government of Cairo had always been jealous of the enterprise which Bruce had undertaken, and as a regular prohibition had often been made by the Porte, Bruce pretended that his destination was to India. He appeared in public as seldom as possible, unless disguised, and was soon considered as a fakir, or dervish, moderately skilled in magic, and who cared for nothing but books and study; a reputation which enabled him privately to purchase many Arabic manuscripts, which his knowledge of the language assisted him to select. Of the French residents, Bruce speaks in very high terms; however, rather sparing in his praises of the government, he adds, "but a more brutal, unjust, tyrannical, oppressive, avaricious set of infernal miscreants, there is

not on earth, than are the members of the government of Cairo!"

This government had consisted of twenty-four Beys; but there were only seven when Bruce was at Cairo, one of whom commanded the whole. This Bey, the celebrated Ali, with all his good sense and understanding, was still a Mameluke, and had the principles of a slave. Three men, of different religions, possessed his confidence, and governed his councils, all at one time. The first was a Greek, the second a Jew, and the third an Egyptian Copt, his secretary. "It would have required," says Bruce, "a great deal of discernment and penetration to have determined which of these was the most worthless, or most likely to betray him.

"The secretary, whose name was Risk, had the address to supplant the other two, at the time they thought themselves at the pinnacle of their glory, overawing every Turk, and robbing every Christian. The Greek was banished from Egypt, and the Jew bastinadoed to death. Such is the tenure of Egyptian ministers! Risk professed astrology, and the Bey, like all other Turks, believed in it implicitly. To this folly, he sacrificed his own good understanding; and Risk, probably in pay to Constantinople, led him from one wild scheme to another, till he undid him—by the stars!"

When Bruce's cases of instruments were opened at the custom-house of Alexandria, they naturally prepossessed Risk in favour of their owner's superior knowledge in astrology. The Jew, who was master of the custom-house, was ordered not to take them out of their places, or even to touch them, and they were forwarded to Bruce without duty or fees. The next day Risk waited upon him, and when the British traveller offered him a small present for himself

and a very handsome one for his master, he was most agreeably surprised to find it returned with a message, "that he was under the immediate protection of the Bey." This mysterious politeness was more than Bruce could comprehend. He had not even seen the Bey, and it could not be any prepossession in his favour. He was an absolute stranger in the land, and he therefore resolved to ask the advice of one of his friends, who instantly cautioned him against either offending or trusting himself in the hands of Risk,—a merciless man, capable of the blackest designs.

In a short time, this Copt came to Bruce's landlord, to inquire about his knowledge of the stars. The landlord, seeing the drift of the inquiry, spoke highly of the stranger's superior science, which he described as being sufficient to foretell the destinies of the Bey. Accordingly, in a few days, Bruce received a letter from Risk, desiring him to go to the convent of St. George, (about three miles from Cairo,) where the Greek patriarch would receive him, and where he would also receive the Bey's further orders. On reaching the convent, he was accosted by the venerable patriarch, Father Christopher, the identical person who had lived under his roof at Algiers, and by whom he had been taught to speak the modern Greek. From this worthy man he learned that there were many Greeks then in Abyssinia, all of them in high power, and some holding the first places in the empire; that they corresponded with the patriarch whenever an opportunity offered; that at all times they held him in great respect; that his will, when signified to them, was of the greatest authority, and that obedience was paid to it as to holy writ. Father Christopher offered, with the

greatest kindness, to address letters in favour of Bruce, and three copies were accordingly sent by different ways, accompanied by a nadmonitory epistle-general to the whole of the Greeks in Abyssinia, which, in form of a bull, was concocted by Bruce himself, assisted by his excellent and venerable friend. By this the patriarch desired that instead of pretending to put themselves on a footing with the traveller, who was about to arrive at the court of Abyssinia, they should unite in doing everything in their power to serve him; that *he* was the free citizen of a powerful nation—that *they* were slaves, who were only fit to be his servants; and that, in fact, one of their countrymen was actually living in that capacity with Bruce. These sour observations were artfully mixed up with a very savoury pardon for all their past sins, which was to be granted to them for the attentions they were to pay the stranger.

One night, about nine o'clock, Risk sent to Bruce desiring him to come to the Bey; and he accordingly entered his presence. He was presented to a young man, sitting upon a large sofa, covered with crimson and cloth of gold; his turban, his girdle, and the head of his dagger sparkled with diamonds, one of which was of extraordinary size. He entered abruptly into discourse about the war between Russia and the Turks, and asked Bruce if he had calculated what would be the consequence of that war. With becoming gravity our astrologer replied, "That the Turks would be beaten by sea and land wherever they presented themselves." Again the Bey asked, "Whether Constantinople would be burned or taken?" "Neither," replied Bruce, with great dignity; "but after much bloodshed, peace will be made with little advantage to either party."

The Bey struck his hands together, swore an oath in Turkish, and, turning aside to Risk, he said, with much emphasis, "That will be sad indeed! . . . but truth is truth, and God is merciful!" He then offered Bruce coffee, sweetmeats, and protection; and, having desired him to inform Risk if any one dared to wrong him, dismissed him from his presence.

A few nights afterwards the Bey again sent for Bruce. At the door he met the Janissary Aga, who had absolute power over life and death, without appeal, all over Cairo and its neighbourhood. Having learnt that Bruce was the "Hakim Englese" (the English physician), he politely asked him to prescribe for him, as he was not very well. Bruce replied to him in Arabic, that he could not then stay, as the Bey was waiting. "No! no! go! for God's sake, go!" exclaimed the Aga; "any time will do for me!"

The Bey was sitting completely by himself; he was leaning forward with a wax taper in one hand, and holding in the other a small slip of paper close to his eyes, which were apparently weak. He did not perceive Bruce until he was close to him, and started when he heard the word "Salam!" He at first seemed hardly to know why he had sent for Bruce, but at last, in a melancholy tone, complained that he had been sick immediately after his dinner, and that he was afraid something had been given to do him mischief. Bruce felt his pulse, and, having inquired whether his meat had been dressed in copper properly tinned, he ordered the Bey to drink warm tea and water until it should cause him to vomit. The great man looked astonished, and asked Bruce if he knew that he was a Mussulman. "Sir," replied Bruce, "I am none; I tell you what is good for your body, and I have nothing to do with your religion or your soul;" and with these words he took his

departure, the Dey muttering to himself, "He speaks like a man!"

Next morning Risk came to the convent to say that the Bey was far from well, upon which Bruce interrupted him by inquiring how the warm tea and water had operated. Risk replied that the Bey had not yet taken it, and then confessed, that, by desire of his master, he was come to see how it was to be made. Bruce soon showed this, by infusing a very little green tea in a large quantity of warm water, on which Risk insinuated that it would be further necessary for Bruce to drink it, in order to show what effect it would produce upon the Bey. Bruce, with considerable dignity, declined being patient and physician at the same time, but very politely offered to make Risk sick, which, he said, would equally answer the purpose of instruction; however, this suggestion was not very readily attended to, and yet Risk was evidently at a loss how to proceed. The poor old excellent Greek priest, Father Christopher, happening unluckily to intrude at this very moment, it was intantly agreed to vomit the patriarch, who, finding himself in danger, and that the odds were two to one against him, instantly sent for a caloyer, or young monk, who was absolutely turned inside out before them.

Bruce now became anxious to quit his solitary mansion at the convent: from Risk he procured peremptory letters of recommendation to Sheikh Haman, to the Governor of Syene, Ibrim, and Upper Egypt; also letters from Ali Bey to the Bey of Suz, to the Sherriffe of Mecca, to the Naybe or governor of Masuah (the port of Abyssinia), and to the King of Sennaar. Anxious to reduce his baggage as much as possible, he tore from his books those pages only which were likely to be of service

to him, and having taken leave of the Bey, and bidding adieu to his friends, he embarked with his little party on the 12th December, to proceed up the Nile, which, partly flowing from the distant mountains of Abyssinia, meanders through the lifeless desert of Nubia, and down the narrow valley or ravine of Egypt, separated from sandy or rocky deserts, by two chains of mountains which inclose this little strip of irrigated land.

Bruce's boat or canja, which was to carry him to Furshoot, the residence of Haman, the Sheikh of Upper Egypt, was about a hundred feet in length, with two masts, each bearing an enormous latine sail, the mainsail-yard being one hundred and twenty feet in length. The cabin or dining-room was about twenty feet square, with close latticed windows made to admit the freshness of the air, and yet to be a defence against a set of robbers on the Nile, who are in the habit of swimming under water, or in the dark on goat-skins, to pilfer from vessels everything they can lay their hands on.

Previous to sailing, Bruce had taken the precaution of applying to his useful friend, Mr. Secretary Risk, concerning the captain of the canja, Hagi Hassan Abou Cuffi, who was obliged to deliver up his son Mahomet as security for his own behaviour. The wind being contrary, the canja was towed against the stream by a rope, and it thus advanced but a few miles to two convents of Copts, called Deireteen. Here Bruce passed the night, having had a fine view of the pyramids of Geeza and Saccara, and being still in sight of a prodigious number of other pyramids, which, like beings of another world, seemed everywhere to be haunting the desert. On the opposite bank of the Nile, an animated picturesque scene

was displayed in the encampment of a large party of the Howadat Arabs.

On the morning of the 13th the canja unfurled her vast sails, and slowly passed a considerable village called Turra, on the east side of the river; and Sheikh Atman, a small village of about thirty houses, on the west. The Nile is here about a quarter of a mile broad, the distance between the foot of the mountain and the Libyan shore being about half a mile; and Bruce agrees with Herodotus in thinking this the narrowest part of the valley termed Egypt.

In order to search for the ancient city of Memphis, Bruce left his boat at Sheihk Atman, and, entering a large and thick wood of palm-trees, continued this course until he came to several large villages, called Metrahenni, all built among date-trees, so as scarcely to be seen from the shore. The people in these villages were of a yellow, sickly colour, with dejected, inanimate countenances. Towards the south in the desert, as far as the eye can reach, there are vast numbers of pyramids, some just appearing like vessels at sea, above the horizon. "A man's heart," says Bruce, "fails him in looking to the south and south-west of Metrahenni; he is lost in the immense expanse of desert which he sees full of pyramids before him. Struck with terror from the unusual scene of vastness opened all at once upon leaving the palm-trees, he becomes dispirited from the effect of the sultry climate. From habits of idleness contracted at Cairo,—from the stories he has heard of the bad government and ferocity of the people,—from want of language and want of plan, he shrinks from attempting any discovery in the moving sands of Saccara, and embraces in safety and in quiet the reports of others who he

thinks have been more inquisitive and more adventurous than himself."

Various and conflicting are the opinions quoted by Bruce as to the situation of Memphis, the old capital of Egypt. Dr. Pococke looked for Memphis at Metrahenni and Mohannen, because Pliny* says the pyramids were between Memphis and the Delta; Mr. Niebuhr, the Danish traveller, agreed with Dr. Pococke. Dr. Shaw quoted a contrary sentiment from Pliny†; he cited Diodorus Siculus‡, who describes Memphis at the point of the Delta; Pliny§, again, who says it was fifteen miles from the Delta; and Herodotus||, who declares that Memphis lay under the sandy mountains of Lybia. Dr. Shaw therefore warmly contended that Memphis was at Geeza.

In this literary tournament, Bruce, with his usual warmth of character, rides "ventre à terre" against Dr. Shaw, and insists on placing Memphis at Metrahenni. He denies that the point of the Delta itself is a fixed and unalterable boundary—he quotes Diodorus, who says that Memphis was placed in the straits, or narrowest part of Egypt; and to prove that the ruins of this city were not altogether destroyed in the time of the Ptolemies, he cites Strabo, who says that when he was in Egypt, Memphis was called the capital¶ of Egypt, that there was entire a temple of Osiris,—that the apis or sacred ox was worshipped and kept there, and that there was likewise "an apartment for the mother of that ox!"

After the above argument, it is scarcely necessary

* Plin. lib. v. cap. 9.

† Plin. lib. xxxvi. cap. 12.

‡ Diod. Sic. p. 45, § 50.

§ Shaw's Travels, cap. 4, p. 298.

|| Lib. ii. pp. 141, 168, 105, 103. ¶ Strabo, lib. vii. p. 944.

to remind the general reader that no vestige of Memphis exists! Amongst the super-scientific, its ancient situation still remains a subject of dispute; but considering how many real objects, points, and situation, there are in creation of which we are totally ignorant, it might surely be said of Memphis, that “*de non existantibus et de non apparentibus eadem est ratio.*”

It was about four o'clock, the sun was on the horizon, and the whole country was waiting for that moment of placid enjoyment which, in a hot climate, suddenly succeeds the painful heat of the day, when Bruce returned from Metrahenni to the canja; and on the following morning, with a fair wind, and in high spirits, he continued for some days to stem the strong current of the Nile. He passed Regnagie, Zaragara, and a series of picturesque villages, which studded the highly cultivated and verdant country that on both the right and left lay between the river and the mountains. At Woodan the Nile was about a quarter of a mile broad, the cultivated ground being about four miles in breadth on the east side of the river, and about twice that distance to the foot of the mountains on the west or opposite side. The villages which gave life and animation to this “happy valley,” were mostly surrounded by palm-trees: and as Bruce, from the deck of the canja, gazed upon them with feelings of curiosity and delight, he, for some time, constantly inquired their names of his rais or captain, but the man at last honestly told him that he did not know what they were called, and he added, that the boatmen on the Nile being in the habit of passing these villages very rapidly, and being only anxious to get to the end of their voyage, seldom troubled themselves to learn their names; and that when tiresome questions were

put to them by inquisitive European travellers, instead of confessing their ignorance, they were in the habit of saying any word that came uppermost, which, though sometimes of a ridiculous meaning, and very often highly indecent, have nevertheless gravely made their appearance in some of our books of travels.

After passing with great velocity Nizelet, Embarcak, Cubabac, Nizelet Omar, Racca Kibeer, and Racco Sequier, they came in sight of Alfia, a large village at some distance from the Nile, in the vicinity of which they all passed the night. "All the valley here," says Bruce, "is green, the palm grows beautiful, and the Nile is deep—still it is not a prospect that pleases, for the whole ground that is sown to the sandy ascent of the mountains is but a narrow strip of three-quarters of a mile broad; and the mountains themselves, which here begin to have a moderate degree of elevation, and which bound this narrow valley, are white, gritty, sandy, and uneven, and perfectly destitute of all manner of verdure."

After having been detained a short time by foggy weather, the canja sailed by a convent of Copts. The strip of green wheat which had hitherto bounded both shores of the Nile ceased for about half a mile on each side of this convent, for the poor wretches who inhabited it, accustomed to the merciless violence of the Arabs, declined to sow, knowing that they would not be permitted to reap. At the village of Nizelet begin large plantations of sugar-canes, the first they had seen, and the people were then loading boats with them to proceed to Cairo.

Proceeding onwards, they came to large plantations of dates, and beyond them the people were seen occupied in cutting the sugar-canes. The houses here had on their roofs receptacles for pigeons, from

which was derived a considerable profit. The wind had now become so strong, that the canja could scarcely carry her sails; the current was rapid, and the velocity with which she dashed against the water was terrible. "We came," says Bruce, "to a village called Rhoda, where we saw the magnificent ruins of the ancient city of Antinous, built by Adrian. Unluckily I knew nothing of these ruins when I left Cairo, and had taken no pains to provide myself with letters of recommendation, as I could easily have done. I asked the rais what sort of people they were? He said that the town was composed of very bad Turks, very bad Moors, and very bad Christians; that several devils had been seen among them lately, who had been discovered by being better and quieter than any of the rest. After the character we had of the inhabitants, all our fire-arms were brought to the door of the cabin. In the mean time, partly with my naked eye, and partly with my glass, I observed the ruins so attentively as to be perfectly in love with them."

While Bruce was thus gazing at these ruins, the people or "devils" on shore attacked some of the canja's boatmen: three shots were even fired at the vessel, which Bruce returned by discharging his blunderbuss. The crew were very desirous to go on shore to fire upon the people; but Bruce, an old traveller, with a very proper *esprit de corps*, says, "Besides that I had no inclination of that kind, I was very loth to frustrate the attempts of some future traveller, who may add this to the great remains of architecture we have preserved already." He therefore continued his course; and while his mind was secretly exulting in the reflection, that every hour was bringing him towards the ultimate object of his ambition, his attention was most agreeably diverted

by the various objects which passed in succession before him. Village after village came in sight ; at times the shore was covered with date-trees, and occasionally with the acacia—that solitary inhabitant of all deserts, from the most northern part of Arabia to the extremity of Ethiopia. A considerable part of the west shore was cultivated and sown from the very foot of the mountains to the water's edge, the grain having been merely thrown upon the mud as soon as ever the water had left it ; the wheat was at this time about four inches high, the acacia-trees on the opposite side in full flower. Every object, however trifling, or however serious, seemed to claim some affinity with Bruce's attention, and to offer him some moral. "I was very well pleased," he says, "to see here, for the first time, two shepherd-dogs, lapping up the water from the stream, then lying down in it with great seeming leisure and satisfaction. It refuted the old fable, that the dogs living on the banks of the Nile run as they drink for fear of the crocodile."

At Achnim there is a hospice or convent of Franciscans :— "They received us," says Bruce, "civilly, and that was just all. I think I never knew a number of priests met together who differed so little in capacity and knowledge, having barely a routine of scholastic disputation ; on every other subject inconceivably ignorant." These priests lived in ease and safety, being protected by the Arab chieftain Hamam ; and their acting as physicians reconciled them to the people.

Sailing from Achnim, Bruce passed Girge, the largest town he had seen since he left Cairo. The Nile makes a loop or bend here. The next morning Bruce and Balugani, impatient to visit the greatest and most magnificent scene of ruins that are in Upper Egypt, set out for Beliani, and about ten

o'clock in the morning arrived at Dendera, with letters from the Bey of Cairo to the two principal men there, commanding them most peremptorily to take care of Bruce; and also a letter of very strong recommendation to Sheikh Haman at Furshoot, in whose territory they were. Bruce pitched his tent by the river side, and from the people to whom he was thus addressed he soon received a horse and three asses to convey him to the ruins.

“Dendera,” says Bruce, “is a considerable town at this day, all covered with thick groves of palm-trees, the same that Juvenal describes it to have been in his time. . . . This place is governed by a cashief, appointed by Sheikh Haman. A mile south of the town are the ruins of two temples, one of which is so much buried under ground that little of it is to be seen; but the other, which is by far the most magnificent, is entire, and accessible on every side. It is also covered with hieroglyphics, both within and without, all in relief, and of every figure, simple and compound, that ever has been published or called a hieroglyphic. Great part of the colouring yet remains upon the stones; red in all its shades, especially that dark, dusky colour called Tyrian purple; yellow very fresh; sky-blue (that is, near the blue of an eastern sky, several shades lighter than ours); green of different shades: these are all the colours preserved. It was no part of my plan or inclination to enter into the detail of this extraordinary architecture; quantity and solidity are two principal requisites, that are seen here with a vengeance! It strikes and imposes on you at first sight; but the impressions are like those made by the size of mountains, which the mind does not retain for any considerable time after seeing them. I think a very ready hand might spend six months, from

morning to night, before he could copy the hieroglyphics in the inside of the temple."

The next day the canja proceeded to the convent of Italian friars at Furshoot, who received Bruce much more kindly than the monks of Achnim. Furshoot is situated in a large cultivated plain, and the population of the town is very considerable. Bruce had only hired the canja to proceed to this place, but being on good terms with the rais or captain, he prevailed upon him to take him on to Syene and bring him back to Furshoot for four pounds, with a trifling premium if he behaved well. "And if you behave ill," said Bruce, "what do you think you will deserve?" "To be hanged!" replied the rais.

On the 7th of January, 1769, Bruce left Furshoot; and sailing by How, he came to El Gourni, which he thinks might have been part of ancient Thebes. "About half-a-mile north of El Gourni," says Bruce, "are the magnificent, stupendous sepulchres of Thebes; a hundred of these, it is said, are excavated into sepulchral and a variety of other apartments. I went through seven of them with a great deal of fatigue. It is a solitary place; and my guides, either from a natural impatience and distaste that these people have at such employments, or their fears of the banditti that live in the caverns of the mountains were real, importuned me to return to the boat even before I had begun my search, or got into the mountain where are the many large apartments of which I was in quest."

In one of these sepulchres Bruce and Balugani found three harps painted in fresco upon the panels. "As the first harp," says Bruce, "seemed to be the most perfect and least spoiled, I immediately attached myself to this, and desired my clerk to take upon

him the charge of the second. My first drawing was that of a man playing upon a harp."

We must here observe, that when Bruce, on his return to England, published his drawings of these sketches, his enemies declared very positively that he had come by them unfairly; by much sophistry they endeavoured to prove that Bruce had never been in the sepulchres at all; and even Brown, who visited Thebes, has insinuated that Bruce must have drawn them in England from memory. Now, in contradiction to this illiberal accusation, it must be stated, that pencilled sketches of the two harps are still preserved among Bruce's papers, and that one of them at least is evidently the work of Luigi Balugani, who did not live to return to Europe: however, still Bruce was disbelieved, and it was positively maintained that he had never been at the sepulchre at all; but sooner or later truth always prevails. The following is an extract (page 148) from "Travels in Egypt and Nubia, &c., by the Hon. Charles Leonard Irby and James Mangles, Commanders in the Royal Navy; printed for private distribution. London. 1823."

"We (Captains Irby and Mangles, attended by Belzoni) now explored the other tombs (at Thebes), but found nothing new to add to our former observations. In the small chamber where Bruce copied the harp he gave to Mr. Burney for his history of music, *we saw that traveller's name scratched over the very harp*, which we think strong presumptive evidence that he drew it himself, though he has been accused of drawing it afterwards from memory. He is erroneous in the number of strings which he has given to it: the instrument itself is not unlike the original, though the musician is very indifferently copied."

After roughly copying these ancient harps, which Bruce little thought would ever be made to vibrate to the dishonour of his character, he made preparations for proceeding further in his researches, but his conductors lost all subordination. They were afraid his intention was to sit in this cave all night, (it really was,) and to visit the rest next morning. With great clamour and marks of discontent they dashed their torches against the largest harp, and scrambling out of the cave, left Bruce and Balugani in the dark. With some difficulty they groped their way out of these ancient, gloomy sepulchres of the dead; and, as soon as they came to the sunshine and freshness of the living world, they abandoned all further research and rode to the boat. At midnight, a gentle breeze springing up, the canja was wafted up to Luxor, where Bruce was well received by the governor, who gave him a quantity of provisions: among these were some lemons and sugar, with which he made for himself and his party a regular bowl of punch, which they drank in "remembrance of Old England."

"Luxor," says Bruce, "and Carnac, a mile and a quarter below it, are by far the largest and most magnificent scenes of ruins in Egypt, much more extensive and stupendous than those of Thebes and Dendera put together."

Two days after the canja had sailed from Luxor, it reached Sheikh Amner, the encampment of the Arabs Ababdé; and as this tribe extends from Cosseir on the Red Sea far into the desert which Bruce was to cross, he thought it politic and highly important to cultivate their protection.

Sheikh Amner is a collection of villages, composed of miserable huts, which contained, in Bruce's estimation, about a thousand effective men, who possessed

few horses, being principally mounted on camels. They formed the barrier, or bulwark, against the prodigious number of Arabs, principally the Bisha-reen, who are nominally the subjects of the kingdom of Sennaar. Ibrahim, the son of Sheikh, who had known Bruce at Furshoot, and had received from him medicines for his father, recognised him the moment he arrived; and, after acquainting his father, he came with about a dozen naked attendants, armed with lances, to escort Bruce, who had no sooner arrived at the tent of the Sheikh, than a great dinner was placed before him.

Bruce and his party were then introduced to the old Sheikh, who was very ill, and lying in the corner of the tent on a carpet, his head resting on a cushion. This veteran chief of the Ababdé, called Nimmer, which means "the Tiger," was a man of about sixty years of age, suffering dreadfully from a most painful disorder, which, though very common among those who drink water from the draw-wells of the desert, is seldom met with on the banks of the Nile. Bruce had sent to this man, from Badjoura, a number of soap pills, which had afforded him very great relief; and he now gave him lime-water, promising that on his return he would teach his people how to make it. After a long conversation with this "Royal Tiger," whose savage disposition seemed to have been softened by feelings of pain and gratitude, Bruce asked him to tell him truly, on the faith of an Arab, (which he knew these wild people nobly prided themselves in maintaining inviolate,) whether his tribe, if they met him in the desert, would forget that he had on that day eaten and drank with their chieftain?

"The old man Nimmer," says Bruce, "on this rose from his carpet, and sat upright—a more ghastly

and more horrid figure I never saw. 'No!' said he, 'Sheikh, cursed be those men of my people, or others, that ever shall lift up their hand against you, either in the desert or the tell*. As long as you are in this country, or between this and Cosseir, my son shall serve you with heart and hand; . . . one night of pain that your medicines freed me from, would not be repaid if I were to follow you on foot to Messir †.' "

Bruce now thought it a proper moment to unfold, for the first time, that his real object was to get into Abyssinia. The Sheikh kindly and calmly discussed the subject, and concluded by advising him to retrace his steps to Kenné, or Cuft, on the Nile, from thence to cross the desert to Cosseir, a port on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea—from thence to go over to Jidda, which is on the opposite side of the gulf, near Mecca, and from that port to sail for Abyssinia; he added that he himself was sending a cargo of wheat to Cosseir, to be again shipped for Jidda. "But," said Bruce, (who thought it prudent once again publicly to touch a string, the very sound of which was most important to his safety,) "all that is right, Sheikh; yet suppose your people meet me in the desert, in going to Cosseir or otherwise, how should we fare in that case? Should we fight?" "I have told you, Sheikh, already," replied the Tiger, "cursed be the man who lifts his hand against you!"

Encouraged by the repetition of this uncouth benediction, Bruce frankly told the Nimmer that he would proceed to Cosseir—that he was Yagoube—seeking to do good, and bound by a vow to wander through deserts.

* The part of Egypt which is cultivated. † Cairo.

The old man, after some thought, muttered something to his sons, in a dialect which Bruce did not understand; and while, pretending to take no notice, he was occupying himself in mixing some lime-water, the whole hut was suddenly filled with priests, monks, and the heads of families. After joining hands, and solemnly mumbling, for about two minutes, a kind of wild prayer, in various attitudes, they declared themselves and their children accursed if ever they lifted their hands against Yagoubé in the tell, in the desert, or on the river; and then, muttering curses between their teeth on the name of Turk, the unearthly-looking crew vanished. "Medicines and advice," says Bruce, "being given on my part, faith and protection pledged on theirs, two bushels of wheat and seven sheep were carried down to the boat; nor could we decline their kindness, as refusing a present in that country, however it is understood in ours, is just as great an affront as coming into the presence of a superior without any present at all."

The tact with which Bruce worms his way through the various difficulties that oppose him—softening the most rigid prejudices, and often managing to convert a barbarous enmity into disinterested friendship, will appear through the whole of his travels; and we cannot now refrain from remarking how ill-advised poor Denham surely was, to attempt to penetrate Africa by going against this stream, dressing himself in the mean, detested garments of a European. Denham says, "We were the first English travellers in Africa who had resisted the persuasion that a disguise was necessary, and who had determined to travel in our real character as Britons and Christians, and to wear, on all occasions, our English dresses:" and what was the result?—"What do you

do here?' said some women, who accosted him; 'you are a Kaffir, khaleel! It is you Christians, with the blue eyes like the hyæna, that eat the blacks whenever you can get them far enough away from their own country!' 'God deliver me from his evil eye!' said a young girl. 'He is,' cried another, 'an uncircumcised Kaffir; neither washes nor prays! eats pork! and will go to hell.' 'Turn him out!' said the Kadi; 'God forbid that any one who has eaten with Christians should give evidence in the laws of Mohamed!' 'Oh! oh! the Lord preserve us from the infernal devil!' they all exclaimed, and screaming 'Y-hy-yo, y-hy-yo!' they all ran off in the greatest alarm." (Denham, vol. ii. p. 40.)

Some years ago, the Bey of Tripoli, who gave permission to Captain Smyth, R. N., and Mr. Warrington, to excavate, explore, and carry away the ruins of ancient Leptis, made the following replies to Captain Smyth and the British consul, who officially waited upon him to ask his advice as to the best mode of getting into the interior of Africa.

Q. Does your Highness imagine it difficult for a party to reach the Nile (Niger) through the dominions of your friend the king of Bornou?

A. Not in the least: the road to Bornou is as beaten as that to Bengazi.

Q. Will your Highness grant protection to a party wishing to proceed that way?

A. Any person wishing to go in that direction (it was the very same route which Denham took), I will send an embassy to Bornou to escort him thither, and from thence the king will protect him to the Nile. *But I must first clothe him as a Turk.*

Q. Will he not be subject to much troublesome inquiry on that head?

A. No; *but he must not say he is a Christian*: people in the interior are very ignorant.

It is with painful reluctance that we have paused for a moment in Bruce's history to make the above observations; but the advice which was given to poor Denham and his gallant companions may be again given to others; and as the proper mode of penetrating Africa is a most important problem in which the lives of future travellers are involved, we only beg the reader henceforward to observe the effect which Bruce's plan of attack produces, and then to judge for himself whether the traveller, who wishes to penetrate Africa, should publicly proclaim himself "a Briton and a Christian," or not. That he should inwardly be both, no one, we hope, will deny; yet religion, like loyalty, need not vauntingly be displayed; and as we know that the African abhors and despises both our religion and our dress, why should we irritate his prejudices by wilfully unfurling these flags of defiance? Most particularly as regards the useless fashion of our dress, which is so very badly adapted to the climate, that at least it may be maintained that English breeches, stockings, and "coats cut to the quick," are more relished by the phlebotomising musquitoes of Africa than by its human inhabitants. Within the tropics, even the sheep wears hair instead of wool.—Why, then, should "a Briton" insist on carrying his fleecy hosiery to the Line?

Bruce being within a day of the cataracts of Syene, called by the Arabs Assuan, sailed on the 20th for that town, and had scarcely arrived, when an unarmed janissary, dressed in long Turkish clothes, and

holding in his hand a white wand, came to tell him that Syene was a garrison town, and that the Aga was at the castle ready to give him an audience, having received a most particular letter from the Bey of Cairo. "I found the Aga," says Bruce, "sitting in a small kiosk, or closet, upon a stone bench with carpets. As I was in no fear of him, I was resolved to walk according to my privileges. I sat down upon a cushion below him, after laying my hand on my breast, and saying, in an audible voice, 'Salam alicum!' (Peace be between us;) to which he answered, without any of the usual difficulty, 'Alicum salum!' (There *is* peace between us.) After sitting down about two minutes, I again got up, and stood in the middle of the room before him, saying, 'I am bearer of a hatésheriffe, or royal mandate to you, Mahomet Aga!' and took the firman out of my bosom, and presented it to him. Upon this he stood upright, and all the rest of the people, before sitting with him, likewise; he bowed his head upon the carpet, then put the firman to his forehead, opened it, and pretended to read it: but he knew well the contents, and, I believe, besides, he could neither read nor write any language. I then gave him the other letters from Cairo, which he ordered his secretary to read in his ear.

"All this ceremony being finished, he called for a pipe and coffee. I refused the first, as never using it, but I drank a dish of coffee, and told him that I was bearer of a confidential message from Ali Bey of Cairo, and wished to deliver it to him without witnesses, whenever he pleased. The room was accordingly cleared without delay, excepting his secretary, who was also going away, when I pulled him back by the clothes, saying, 'Stay, if you please, we shall need you to write the answer.' We were no sooner

left alone, than I told the Aga, that, being a stranger, and not knowing the disposition of his people, or what footing they were on together, and being desired to address myself only to him by the Bey, and our mutual friends at Cairo, I wished to put it in his power (as he pleased or not) to have witnesses of delivering the small present I had brought him from Cairo. The Aga seemed very sensible of this delicacy; and particularly desired me to take no notice to my landlord, the Schourbatchie, of anything I had brought him.

“All this being over, and a confidence established with government, I sent his present by his own servant that night, under the pretence of desiring horses to go to the cataract next day. The message was returned, that the horses were to be ready by six o'clock next morning. On the 21st, the Aga sent me his own horse, with mules and asses for my servants, to go to the cararact.”

Having thus judiciously cleared the way before him, Bruce proceeded to the small villages of the cataract, which are about six miles from Assuan; and on arriving at what is termed the cataract, he was much surprised to find that vessels could sail up it, the river being there not half a mile broad, but divided into a number of small channels. During the whole of the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of January, he was occupied with his instruments, besides which he made many other observations and memoranda; and on the 25th of January, 1769, he prepared to descend the river.

Fain would he have continued to have stemmed the torrent, and it was with secret pain and silent reluctance that BRUCE turned his back upon the sources of the Nile! Yet the advice he had received, and the journey which had been recommended to

him, he had firmly determined to pursue; and, accordingly, on the 26th of January, he embarked at Syene, from the very spot where he again took boat more than three years afterwards.

To his bold, enterprising mind, there was now a melancholy change in the picture. The canja was no longer to be seen proudly striding over the element which opposed her, but with her prodigious mainsail lowered, and even with her masts unshipped, broadside foremost, she was carried down the stream in helpless captivity. From her deck no longer resounded those exclamations of eager delight and sudden surprise which had ushered each new object into view; the scene had lost its freshness and its bloom—the magic, lovely charm of novelty!

In passing Sheikh Amner, Bruce called upon his patient Nimmer, (the Tiger,) Sheikh of the Ababdé, who was better, and as thankful as ever. Bruce renewed his prescriptions, and he his offers of service.

On the second of February he again took up his quarters at Badjoura, in the house which had formerly been consigned to him. “As I was now,” says Bruce, “about to enter on that part of my expedition in which I was to have no further intercourse with Europe, I set myself to work to examine all my observations, and put my journal in such forwardness by explanations where needful, that the labour and pains I had hitherto been at might not be totally lost to the public if I should perish in the journey I had undertaken, which, from all information I could procure, every day appeared to be more and more desperate. Having finished these, at least so far as to make them intelligible to others, I conveyed them to my friends, Messrs. Julian and Rosa, at Cairo, to remain in their custody till I should return, or news came that I was otherwise disposed of.”

CHAPTER V.

Bruce crosses the Desert to the Red Sea—Meets with the Arabs Ababdé at Cosseir—His Adventures in the Red Sea—Arrives at Massuah, the ancient Harbour of Abyssinia.

It was on Thursday, the 16th of February*, 1769, that Bruce joined the caravan which was setting out from Kenné, the *Cæne Emporium* of antiquity. They passed through a few dirty villages of the Azaizy, a poor inconsiderable tribe of Arabs, who exist by supplying cattle for and by attending caravans. The huts of these poor people, which are made of clay in one piece, in the shape of a bee-hive, are seldom above ten feet high, and six feet in diameter. After travelling nearly the whole day, Bruce pitched his tent at Gabba, about a mile from the borders of the desert; and here he passed the night.

On the 17th, at eight o'clock in the morning, he ordered his servants to mount their horses, in order to take charge of their own camels, for there was an indescribable confusion in the caravan, which was to be guarded by two hundred lawless, cowardly fellows, armed with firelocks and mounted on horses. When all was ready, the whole party, at a funereal pace, slowly advanced into the gloomy region of the desert. There was nothing in the prospect to excite

* By a letter which Bruce addressed from London to his friend Mr. Wood, it appears that it was on the 16th of March he left Kenné for Cosseir, but the 16th of February is the day stated in his "Travels."

the energies of the mind or to arouse the feelings. Men and camels, and horses, drooping as they went, seemed alike to be aware that the courage they had now to exert was only of the passive description; all that was required of them was—to suffer! Anger, hatred, and other revengeful feelings—which, like brandy, too often make men thoughtless, and insensible to danger—afforded them no such excitement. They had not the savage pleasure of contending with human enemies—the burning sand and the burning sun it was out of their power to injure.

“Our road,” says Bruce, “was all the way in an open plain, bounded by hillocks of sand and fine gravel, perfectly hard, and not perceptibly above the level of the plain country of Egypt. About twelve miles distant there is a ridge of mountains, of no considerable height, perhaps the most barren in the world. Between these our road lay through plains never three miles broad, but without trees, shrubs, or herbs. There are not even the traces of any living creature, neither serpent nor lizard, antelope nor ostrich, the usual inhabitants of the most dreary deserts. There is no sort of water on the surface, brackish or sweet. Even the birds seem to avoid the place as pestilential, not having seen one of any kind so much as flying over. The sun was burning hot, and upon rubbing two sticks together, in half a minute they both took fire and flamed,—a mark how near the country was reduced to a general conflagration.”

In the evening the caravan was joined by twenty Turks from Caramania, in Asia Minor. They were mounted on camels, and armed with swords, a short gun, and a brace of pistols in their girdles. Having been informed that the large tent belonged to an Englishman, they came to it without ceremony;

told Bruce that they were pilgrims going to Mecca—that they had been very badly treated in travelling from Alexandria—that one of the swimming thieves of the Nile had boarded their vessel, and had carried off a portmanteau containing about two hundred sequins in gold—that the Bey of Girge had given them no redress—and, therefore, hearing that an Englishman was in the caravan, they had come to him to propose that they should join to defend each other against all common enemies. “I cannot conceal,” says Bruce, “the secret pleasure I had in finding the character of my country so firmly established among nations so distant, enemies to our religion, and strangers to our government. Turks from Mount Taurus, and Arabs from the desert of Lybia, thought themselves unsafe among their own countrymen, but trusted their lives and their little fortunes implicitly to the direction and word of an Englishman whom they had never before seen!”

The caravan was detained at Legeta the whole of the 18th, by the arrival of these Turks; but early in the morning of the 19th they proceeded along a narrow plain, hemmed in by barren hills, of a brown calcined colour, like the cinders on the sides of Vesuvius. Passing some mountains of green and red marble, they came into a plain called Hamra, where they first observed the red sand; and on the morning of the 20th, after having mounted some hills of porphyry, they began to descend. At noon they came to a few single acacia-trees, which, after rain, form a station for the Atouni Arabs, and at night they encamped on a small barren plain. On the 21st, in passing some defiles, they were alarmed, by a false report that the Arabs were approaching. At noon they encamped at Mesag el Terfowey, where they got the first fresh water which they had

tasted since they left the Nile. Next morning, before day-break, the caravan was again in motion, having learned that, only two days before, three hundred of the Atouni had watered at Terfowey.

“It has been a wonder,” says Bruce, “among all travellers, and with myself among the rest, where the ancients procured that prodigious quantity of fine marble with which all their buildings abound. That wonder, however, among many others, now ceases, after having passed, in four days, more granite, porphyry, marble, and jasper, than would build Rome, Athens, Corinth, Syracuse, Memphis, Alexandria, and half a dozen such cities. About ten o’clock, descending very rapidly, with green marble and jasper on each side of us, but no other green thing whatever, we had the first prospect of the Red Sea.”

To the eye which has for a length of time viewed nothing but fertile land, the sight of the sea is always delightful: it roams with pleasure over the wide expanse of moving waters, revelling in the freedom and freshness of a new element. But to the parched, thirsting, and weary traveller, who has journeyed over the scorched, arid, lifeless desert of Africa, in whose imagination water is wealth, the sudden view of the great ocean creates ecstatic feelings which it is utterly impossible to describe.

Cossier is a small mud-walled village, built on the shore of the Red Sea. It is defended by a square fort, containing a few pieces of cannon, just sufficient to terrify the Arabs from plundering the town, which is often filled with corn going to Mecca. Bruce had an order from Sheikh Hamam to lodge in the castle; however, a few hours before he arrived, Hussein Bey, landing from Mecca and Jidda, had taken possession of the apartments. This Bey, however, hearing that the English traveller had the

firman of the Grand Seignior, with letters from the Bey of Cairo, and, moreover, that he had furnished the stranger Turks with water in the desert, of his own accord became acquainted with Bruce, treating him with attention and respect,—which was no sooner observed by his fellow-travellers, the Turks, than they complained to Hussein Bey, that one of the Arabs had attempted to rob them in the desert.

“What is the reason,” said this great man, very gravely, to Bruce, “that when you English people know so well what good government is, you did not order his head to be struck off when you had him in your hands, before the door of the tent?” “Sir,” replied Bruce, with the real feelings of a ‘Briton and a Christian,’ “I know well what good government is, but, being a stranger and a Christian, I have no sort of title to exercise the power of life and death in this country; only in this one case, when a man attempts my life, then I think I am warranted to defend myself, whatever may be the consequence to him. My men took him in the fact, and they had my orders, in such cases, to beat the offenders, so that they should not steal these two months again. They did so—that was punishment enough in cold blood.” “But my blood,” interrupted the Bey, “never cools with regard to such rascals as these. Go! (he called one of his attendants), tell Hassan, the head of the caravan, from me, that unless he hangs that Arab before sunrise to-morrow, I will carry him in irons to Furshoot.”

While Bruce was at Cosseir, the caravan from Syene arrived, escorted by four hundred Ababdé, armed with javelins, and mounted on camels, two on each, sitting back to back: they conducted a thousand camels laden with wheat. The whole town was in terror at the influx of so many barbarians; and

even Bruce sent all his instruments, money, books, and baggage, to a chamber in the castle. The following morning, as he was loitering in dishabille on the shore, looking for sea-shells, one of his servants came to him in great alarm, to say that the Ababdé had been told that Bruce's Arab, Abd-el-gin, was an Atouni, their enemy, and that they had therefore dragged him away to cut his throat. Bruce, dressed as he was with a common red turban on his head, vaulted on his servant's horse, and galloping through the townspeople, who fancied, with alarm, that the Ababdé were pursuing him, reached the sands, and proceeding as hard as he could go for nearly two miles he saw a crowd of Arabs before him. Desirous to save the life of the poor wretch, his servant, he had totally forgotten his own safety.

"Upon my coming near them," says Bruce, "six or eight of them surrounded me on horseback, and began to gabble in their own language. I was not very fond of my situation. It would have cost them nothing to have thrust a lance through my back, and taken the horse away; and, after stripping me, to have buried me in a hillock of sand, if they were so kind as to give themselves that last trouble. However, I pricked up courage, and putting on the best appearance I could, said to them, steadily, without trepidation, 'What men are these before?' The answer, after some pause, was, 'They are men;' and they looked very queerly, as if they meant to ask each other, 'What sort of spark is this?' 'Are those before us Ababdé?' said I; 'are they from Sheikh Amner?' One of them nodded, and grunted sullenly, rather than said, 'Ay, Ababdé, from Sheikh Amner.' 'Then, salum alicum!' said I, 'we are brethren. How does the Nimmer? Who commands you here? Where is Ibrahim?' At

the mention of the Nimmer (the tiger) and Ibrahim, their countenance changed, not to anything sweeter or gentler than before, but to a look of great surprise. They had not returned my salutation, 'Peace be between us;' but one of them asked me who I was. 'Tell me first,' said I, 'who is that you have before?' 'It is an Arab, our enemy,' says he, 'guilty of our blood.' 'It is not so,' replied I, 'he is my servant, a Howadat Arab; his tribe lives in peace at the gates of Cairo, in the same manner yours of Sheikh Amner does at those of Assouan. I ask you, where is Ibrahim, your Sheikh's son?' 'Ibrahim,' says he, 'is at our head; he commands us here. But who are you?' 'Come with me, and show me Ibrahim,' said I, 'and I will show you who I am.'

"I passed by these, and by another party of them. They had thrown a hair rope about the neck of Abdel-gin, who was almost strangled already, and cried out most miserably to me not to leave him. I went directly to the black tent, which I saw had a long spear thrust up in the end of it, and met at the door Ibrahim and his brother, and seven or eight Ababdé. He did not recollect me, but I dismounted close to the tent door, and had scarcely taken hold of the pillar of the tent, and said, 'Fiarduc!' when Ibrahim and his brother both knew me. 'What!' said they, 'are you Yagoube, our physician and our friend?' 'Let me ask you,' replied I, 'if you are the Ababdé of Sheikh Amner, that cursed yourselves and your children if you ever lifted a hand against me or mine, in the desert or in the ploughed field? If you have repented of that oath, or sworn falsely on purpose to deceive me, here I am come to you in the desert.' 'What is the matter?' said Ibrahim; 'we are the Ababdé of Sheikh Amner—there are no other; and

we still say, Cursed be he, whether our father or child, that lifts his hand against you in the desert or in the ploughed field.' 'Then,' said I, 'you are all accursed in the desert and in the field, for a number of your people are going to murder my servant. They took him, indeed, from my house in the town; perhaps that is not included in your curse, as it is neither in the desert nor the ploughed field.' I was very angry. 'Whew!' said Ibrahim, with a kind of whistle, 'that is downright nonsense. Who are those of my people that have authority to murder and take prisoners, while I am here? Here, one of you, get upon Yagoubé's horse, and bring that man to me.' Then, turning to me, he desired I would go into the tent and sit down. 'For God renounce me and mine,' says he, 'if it is as you say, and one of them hath touched the hair of his head, if ever he drinks of the Nile again!' A number of people, who had seen me at Sheikh Amner, now came all around me; some with complaints of sickness, some with compliments; more with impertinent questions that had no relation to either. At last came in the culprit Abd-el-gin, with forty or fifty of the Ababdé who had gathered round him, but no rope about his neck."

The evident stiffness of the above, and other conversations related by Bruce in his travels, has induced his enemies to declare that they are unnatural, and, consequently, that they are false. But, in justice to him, it should always be remembered, that these conversations not only occurred with people whose ideas as well as manner of expressing them, are totally different from our own, but that the conversations, as stated in Bruce's Travels, are only the translations of the words which were actually made use of. Their stiffness is therefore a proof rather of their truth; for,

had they appeared in easy English, it is most certain that they could not have been correct translations.

Upon inquiring why the Ababdé wished to murder Abd-el-gin, Bruce was informed, that the captain of his caravan, Hassan, had insidiously induced them to kill this man, against whom he had long entertained a great enmity. "I cannot help here," continues Bruce, "accusing myself of what, doubtless, may be well reputed a very great sin, the more so, that I cannot say I have yet heartily repented of it. I was so enraged at the traitorous part which Hassan had acted, that at parting, I could not help saying to Ibrahim, 'Now, Sheikh, I have done everything you have desired, without ever expecting fee or reward; the only thing I now ask you, and it is probably the last, is that you revenge me upon this Hassan, who is every day in your power.' Upon this he gave me his hand, saying, 'He shall not die in his bed, or I shall never see old age.'"

The above anecdote clearly proves—what, indeed, requires no demonstration—that Bruce was by no means a faultless man; yet this act, for which he has been very severely and justly condemned, assumes a more serious complexion in this country than in the place where it was committed; for a man's notion of justice, mercy, &c., like the colour of the chameleon, is considerably affected by the objects which surround it, and the old soldier, as well as the traveller, perfectly well knows how differently he feels and behaves in a lawless and in a civilised country; for when his life is really in danger—when he is obliged, in its defence, to be his own bad lawyer—he often gives way to anger, and other improper feelings, which in domestic life one has happily no opportunity to develop: and yet the man who, in a lawless country, has thus wrongfully

joined in the general laugh against Justice, is often the individual who, from having really seen the contrast, most sincerely respects and admires her, and who in civilised life feels the greatest pleasure in crouching in obedience at her feet. But while Bruce's enemies were justly condemning him for his revengeful conduct towards Hassan, there was a moral in his favour which they completely overlooked, for it is evident that, unless he had frankly become his own accuser, his enemies would never have had it in their power to condemn him. The observations, therefore, which were laid against his cruelty, form a buttress which strongly supports his veracity.

While Bruce was thus engaged on the sands with the Ababdé Arabs, a vessel was seen in distress, and all the boats went to tow her in. Nothing is more dangerous than the corn-trade that is carried on in the Red Sea; the vessels have no decks, are filled choke full of wheat, and are continually lost, but they have scarcely sunk out of sight, when their fate is equally out of mind; the people are deaf to experience, reason, or advice, but, crying Ullah Kerim! (God is great and merciful!) they launch and despatch other vessels, hoping that by a miracle they may be saved.

Bruce having determined to attempt making a survey of the Red Sea, down to the Straits of Babel-mandeb (which means the gate of affliction), took passages for himself and his party in a vessel which was shortly to be ready to receive him. The rais or captain was considered to be a saint, and this hypocrite gravely assured Bruce, that any rock which stood in the way of his vessel would either jump aside, or else turn quite soft like a sponge. Previous to sailing with this man, Bruce embarked in a small boat, the planks of which, instead of being nailed, were sewn together,

and with the assistance of a sort of straw mattress as a sail, he sailed on the 14th of March from the harbour of Cosseir, with an Arab guide, to go to Gibel Zurmud, the emerald mines described by Pliny and other writers. On the 16th he landed on a desert point, and at last came to the foot of these mountains. Inquiring of his guide the name of the spot, the fellow told him it was called "Saiel." "They are never," says Bruce, "at a loss for a name, and those who do not understand the language always believe them. He knew not the name of the place, and perhaps it had no name, but he called it Saiel, which signifies a male acacia-tree, merely because he saw one growing there." At about the foot of the mountain Bruce found five small pits or shafts, from which the ancients are supposed to have drawn emeralds, and then, without having seen a living creature of any sort, he returned to his boat, and proceeded to the islands of Gibel Macowar, to one of which he gave his own name; he was anxious to have sailed still further towards the south, but signs of an approaching storm obliged him to turn and make for Cosseir. A most violent tempest of wind and rain overtook them, and the rais being completely overcome by fear, Bruce, unable to lower the yard, proposed to cut the straw mainsail to pieces. The rais, terrified at the storm, instantly turned towards Bruce, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, began muttering to him something about the mercy and merits of Sidi Ali el Genowi. "D—n Sidi Ali el Genowi," said Bruce, "you beast, cannot you give me a rational answer?" and getting the mainsail in his arms, with a large knife cut it into shreds. On the 19th of March, a little before sunset, they reached the harbour of Cosseir, where they learnt that three vessels had perished in the night with all hands on board.

Having determined the latitude and longitude of Cosseir, and having also completed an immense series of other observations, Bruce embarked on the 5th of April to continue his survey of the Red Sea, concerning the climate of which Captain Tuckey, R.N., who, with most of his officers and men, perished in 1810, in attempting to trace the course of the Niger, thus wrote from Bombay: "It may surprise you to hear me complain of heat after six years broiling between the tropics, but the hottest day I ever felt either in the East or West Indies, was winter to the coolest one we had in the Red Sea; the whole coast of 'Araby the blest,' from Babelmandeb to Suez, for forty miles inland, is an arid sand, producing not a single blade of grass, nor affording one drop of fresh water."

Crossing the gulf, Bruce arrived in four days at Tor, a small straggling village at the foot of Mount Sinai. On the 11th of April he again sailed,—coasting along the eastern shore, landed for a short time at Yambo,—and then continuing towards the south he arrived on the 1st of May at the extensive port of Jidda, which is in Arabia Deserta, and about half way between the isthmus of Suez and the straits of Babelmandeb.

From Yambo to Jidda Bruce slept but little, having been constantly occupied with memoranda, which he was desirous at once to complete. He was, besides, suffering and shaking from his Bengazi ague; and, burnt and weatherbeaten, he was in his neglected dress so like a galiongy, or Turkish seaman, that the captain of the port was astonished at hearing his servants, as they were conducting his baggage to the custom-house, say, that the traveller was an Englishman.

The reader who may have waded thus far in the history of Bruce's life, will probably often have remarked with what unconquerable resolution he has

hitherto proceeded on his journey, fearless of danger, shrinking from no fatigue, always exposing himself to the sun, complaining neither of hunger nor thirst, but, as he daily approaches his distant goal, his spirit, like the water of a great river, seeming to acquire strength and boldness in its course; but it may well be asked, how has the body, that frail, effeminate companion of the mind, fared during this weary journey? On this subject Bruce himself says but little, and it is only by accident that we are now to see a picture of his frame reflected to us by the following remarkable anecdote.

After having been insulted as an impostor by one of his countrymen, "I was conducted," says Bruce, "into a large room, where Captain Thornhill was sitting, in a white calico waistcoat, a very high pointed white cotton night-cap, with a large tumbler of water before him, seemingly very deep in thought. The Emir Bahar's servant brought me forward by the hand, a little within the door; but I was not desirous of advancing much further, for fear of the salutation of being thrown down stairs again. He looked very steadily, but not sternly, at me, and desired the servant to go and shut the door. 'Sir,' says he, 'are you an Englishman?'—I bowed. 'You surely are sick, you should be in your bed; have you been long sick?'—I said, 'Long, Sir,' and bowed. 'Are you wanting a passage to India?' I again bowed. 'Well,' says he, 'you look to be a man in distress; if you have a secret, I shall respect it till you please to tell it me; but if you want a passage to India, apply to no one but Thornhill of the Bengal Merchant. Perhaps you are afraid of somebody; if so, ask for Mr. Greig, my lieutenant, he will carry you on board my ship directly, where you will be safe.' 'Sir,' said I, 'I hope you will find me an honest man; I

have no enemy that I know, either in Jidda or elsewhere, nor do I owe any man anything.' 'I am sure,' says he, 'I am doing wrong, in keeping a poor man standing, who ought to be in his bed. Here! Philip! Philip!' (Philip appeared.) 'Boy,' says he in Portuguese, which, as I imagine, he supposed I did not understand, 'here is a poor Englishman, who should be either in his bed or in his grave; carry him to the cook; tell him to give him as much broth and mutton as he can eat; the fellow seems to have been starved; but I would rather have the feeding of ten to India, than the burying of one at Jidda.' I made as awkward a bow as I could to Captain Thornhill, and said, 'God will return this to your honour some day.' Philip carried me into a courtyard, where they used to expose the samples of their India goods in large bales. It had a portico along the left-hand side of it, which seemed designed for a stable. To this place I was introduced, and thither the cook brought me my dinner. I fell fast asleep upon the mat, while Philip was ordering me another apartment."

This sketch of Bruce's jaded appearance, in common justice, ought to be deeply engraven upon the memory of the reader; and, while the impression is fresh, he cannot but acknowledge what steady perseverance and what manly energy Bruce must have possessed, to have determined, in such a state of health, on continuing to explore the Red Sea, in addition to the arduous Abyssinian task which remained still to be performed. But, while he is sleeping on his mat, it is absolutely necessary that we should no longer delay to notice the observations which have been made on his voyage in the Red Sea, &c.

In the year 1805, thirty-four years after Bruce had left Abyssinia, eleven years after his death, and

while his travels were still looked upon as romances, Lord Valentia, accompanied by his secretary, Mr. Salt, came from India into the Red Sea, and landed at Masuah, the island which forms the port or harbour of Abyssinia, no traveller having penetrated that country since the days of Bruce. His Lordship's object in making this voyage will be best explained in his own words:—"During my stay at Calcutta, I had the honour of freely conversing with the Marquess Wellesley on the subject of the Red Sea, and of stating to him my ideas and feelings, in which I had the happiness of finding that he fully concurred. At length, I proposed to his Excellency that he should order one of the Bombay cruisers to be prepared for a voyage to the Red Sea; and I offered my gratuitous services to endeavour to remove our disgraceful ignorance, by embarking in her, for the purpose of investigating the eastern shore of Africa, and making the necessary inquiries into the present state of Abyssinia and the neighbouring countries."

With these noble, enterprising, and enthusiastic feelings, Lord Valentia, like Bruce, proceeded to the island of Masuah; but on his arrival there, not liking to venture into the interior of such a dangerous and uncivilised country, and yet being desirous to publish "Travels to Abyssinia," &c., he desired Mr. Salt to go forwards. Salt accordingly entered the country, but not being able to reach the capital, he returned to Lord Valentia, leaving behind him one Nathaniel Pierce, an English sailor, who had deserted from his Majesty's brig the *Antelope*, having previously, as a boy, ran away from his own friends.

On his return to England, as is well known, Lord Valentia published, in three quarto volumes, his "Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt;" and in 1810, at his Lordship's sugges-

tion, Mr. Canning sent Salt again to Abyssinia with presents, which consisted of "arms ornamented with gold and jewels, satins, cut glass, painted glass, jewellery, a picture of the Virgin Mary, fine British muslins, two pieces of curricule artillery with the harness complete, one hundred and fifty rounds of ball, and a quantity of powder." With these magnificent presents (which amounted in value to upwards of 1400%), Mr. Salt again attempted to reach the capital, but not succeeding, instead of bringing them back, he left them at Chelicut, which is about half way between the Red Sea and Gondar, the capital, to be forwarded to the king. However, Mr. Salt assures us, "that an appropriate prayer was recited by the high priest, in which the English name was frequently introduced, and on leaving the church, an order was given by the Ras that a prayer should be offered up weekly for the health of his Majesty, the king of Great Britain.—It is scarcely possible to convey," continues Salt, "an adequate idea of the admiration which the Ras and his principal chiefs expressed on beholding these splendid presents. The former would often sit for minutes absorbed in silent reflection, and then break out with the exclamation, 'Etzub! etzub!' (Wonderful! wonderful!) like a man bewildered with the fresh ideas that were rushing upon his mind, from having witnessed circumstances to which he could have given no previous credit*."

Salt having thus got rid of fourteen hundred pounds worth of presents (concerning which other reflecting people besides Abyssinians might most justly say, Etzub! etzub!) returned to Downing Street, leaving behind him Pierce the sailor, and Coffin, a remarkably

* Salt's Voyage to Abyssinia, p. 267.

handsome English boy, who had come to Abyssinia as Lord Valentia's valet.

In October, 1814, Pierce the sailor, then in Abyssinia, wrote a "Small but True Account of the Ways and Manners of the Abyssinians," which was published, in 1820, in the 2nd vol. of "Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay." Pierce remained in Abyssinia thirteen years. He never succeeded in reaching the capital or the fountains of the Nile, but having turned Mahometan, he quarrelled with the Ras, took to drinking, lost his nose and part of his face; and in 1818, having re-embraced Christianity, he came with one of his wives to Cairo, where he died in great distress, a miserable example of a man who had deserted his parents, his religion, and the colours of his country. His life is, we understand, at this moment about to be published.

Coffin, a very intelligent, pleasing, active lad, but of course illiterate, remained in Abyssinia until the year 1827, when he surprised his brother, who is now valet to Lord —, and who had long conceived he was dead, by suddenly calling upon him in London. From a conversation which we have just had with Coffin, we understand that he is about to return to Abyssinia, our present government having refused to give him anything for the king of Abyssinia beyond a trifling complimentary present.

As, excepting Lord Valentia, Salt, Pierce, and Coffin, no European travellers have visited Abyssinia since the days of Bruce, we have conceived it to be absolutely necessary, in order that the reader should be enabled to form his own correct judgment, to explain the connexion which exists between Lord Valentia, his secretary, his valet, and Nathaniel Pierce, the English sailor, who, having deserted from his Majesty's brig, the

Antelope, was patronised by Lord Valentia : for, as the two former, men of education and distinction, have already most violently attacked Bruce, and as the two latter are, we believe, about to follow (naturally enough) the opinions of their masters, (we even understand that Pierce's life has been actually prepared for publication by one or more of Mr. Salt's friends,) we feel it to be a duty which we owe to science, to truth, and to Bruce's memory, to show that these four individuals, without any improper intention, support, rather than corroborate, each other ; and having made this explanation, we, equally unavoidably and unwillingly, proceed to notice a few of the observations which have been made against Bruce by Lord Valentia and Mr. Salt.

“ On the 5th,” says Lord Valentia, the commander in chief of Bruce's enemies, “ I had a most severe attack of fever, which went off at night. I took James's powder, which I thought relieved it. On the 7th I was unwell in the morning, but the James's powder prevented a regular fit. I took *two grains* of calomel night and morning, which gradually recovered me.”—vol. ii. p. 218. His Lordship, alluding to Bruce, further says : “ When a person attempts to give geographical information to the public, it is necessary that his information should be accurate, and that he should not give as certain a single circumstance of which he has not positively informed himself.” Yet Lord Valentia not only published “ Travels to Abyssinia,” (having only landed at Masuah, a harbour which did not at that time even belong to the King of Abyssinia,) but also thus ventures, merely from hearsay, to contradict Bruce, who had been an eye-witness of facts which he related. “ Although,” says his Lordship, “ I was not so fortunate as to reach Macowar, yet I was sufficiently near it to convince my-

self that the *accounts I had received* at Massowah and Suakim of its actual position, were perfectly true, and that Mr. Bruce's adventures at and near it, were complete romances. I confess that I always had some doubts in my mind respecting this voyage from Cosseir, from the absurdity of the account he gives of his taking a prodigious mat-sail, distended by the wind, then blowing a gale, in his arms, and yet having one hand at liberty to cut it in pieces with a knife. Nor could I more easily credit his finding at Gibel Zumrud or Sibergeit, the pits still remaining, five in number, none of them four feet in diameter, from which the ancients were said to have drawn the emeralds," &c. &c.

Now Belzoni, who, in 1816, visited this identical spot, says (p. 325), "the plain which extends from the mountain to the sea was covered in many places with woods of sycamore and ciell (the male acacia) tree, which confirms the account of Bruce. I do not see any reason why Mr. Bruce's assertion of having visited these mountains, should be doubted."

Lord Valentia proceeds to say, "I think it clear from the above observations, that Mr. Bruce represented himself in the first place as visiting an island called Gibbel Zumrud, in lat. $25^{\circ} 3' N.$, though, in fact, that island lies in $23^{\circ} 48'$; and afterwards as reaching another island, Macowar, in $24^{\circ} 2' N.$, which, in fact, lies in $20^{\circ} 38'$. I think it appears equally clear, that it was impossible for him to have made a voyage from Cosseir to the real Macowar, a distance of nearly four hundred miles, in the period he allows himself, from the 14th of March to the 17th *, and consequently that he never did see that place, *although his description of it, and also his assertion that the Arabs there quit the coast of Africa to strike off for*

* Four hundred miles in four days, is not five knots an hour.

Jidda, are both correct. I think it impossible to account for these errors in any other way than by considering *the whole voyage as an episodal fiction.*” Yet Captain Keys, who commanded his Majesty’s ship which Lord Valentia was actually on board, says, “Mr. Bruce is a very accurate observer, and I shall take his latitude and longitude.”

We have thought it but fair to give to the reader Lord Valentia’s testimony, that Bruce’s adventures and voyage in the Red Sea are “complete romances,” and “episodal fiction.” Neither our limits nor our inclination will permit us to offend Lord Valentia by making any very long reply, but we cannot refrain from observing, that if his Lordship had but weighed his words with the scrupulous accuracy with which he appears to have weighed his medicine, he would have paused before he spoke thus disrespectfully of the character of an honest man, whose undertaking was altogether on too vast a scale to be described with the same minute accuracy with which his Lordship thus describes the interesting occupations of his own family group. “With the bait of a cockroach,” says Lord Valentia, “my servant caught a small fish of the genus *Diodon*, Mr. Salt drew it, and I stuffed its skin”!

But we must now for a moment return to poor Bruce, who the reader will recollect was left lying fast asleep on a mat. While he was thus at rest, his baggage was taken to the custom-house, and the keys being in his own pocket, the Vizier, who was exceedingly curious to witness the contents of so many large boxes, ordered them to be opened at the hinges.

The first thing which chanced to present itself to the Vizier’s eyes was the firman of the Grand Seignior, magnificently written and titled, the inscription being powdered with gold dust, and wrapped up in green taffeta. Next appeared a white satin bag, addressed

to the Khan of Tartary! Then a green and gold silk bag with letters directed to the Sherriffe of Mecca! Then a crimson satin bag containing letters for Metical Aga, his chief minister, sword-bearer, and favourite! At last appeared a letter from Ali Bey of Cairo to the Vizier himself, written with all the superiority of a prince to a slave, and concluding by saying, that if any accident happened to Bruce, through his neglect, he would punish the affront at the very gates of Mecca!! At the sight of these letters, the Vizier's curiosity was very suddenly converted into very painful alarm; he ordered the mighty stranger's boxes to be nailed up immediately, and upbraiding the servants for not telling him to whom they belonged, he mounted his horse, and instantly rode down to the English factory. Great inquiry was everywhere made for the English nobleman, whom nobody had seen, and Bruce was still sitting yawning on his mat, when the Vizier entered the court-yard, which was instantly filled with a crowd of people.

“In Heaven!” replied Bruce, calmly and carelessly to a dapper custom-house clerk, who asked him if he could tell him where his master was? But the question being repeated, Bruce said that the baggage belonged to him, and he immediately rose up, and introduced himself to the Vizier and to several of his countrymen that were present; who, when they became better acquainted, united in making arrangements for getting him the strongest recommendations possible to the Naybe, or governor of Masuah, (the island in front of the port of Abyssinia,) to the King of Abyssinia, and to the King of Sennaar.

The English gentlemen at Jidda, and most particularly, a very noble, honourable man, Captain Thomas Price, of the *Lion*, of Bombay, used all their influence with Metical Aga to procure Bruce a good reception

in Abyssinia ; and it was moreover agreed among them that an Abyssinian called Mahomet Gibberti, should be appointed to go with him, to be an eye-witness of the treatment which he should receive. But as Gibberti required a few weeks to prepare himself for the expedition, Bruce, having already been some time at Jidda, determined to continue his survey of the Red Sea. Accordingly, on the 8th of July, 1769, attended by all his countrymen to the water's edge, he sailed, under a salute from the harbour of Jidda, and having landed at the harbour of Gonfodah, on the 31st he reached Gibel Raban, an island in the straits of Babel-mandeb. Bruce had kept a small jar of brandy, expressly that he and his party " might drink the king's health on arriving at his dominions in the Indian ocean ;" and having enjoyed this loyal pleasure, he determined the latitude and longitude of the Straits and of various other places on both coasts, and then sailing to the northward, on the 8th of August (nearly a month from the time he had left Jidda,) he reached Loheia, which is on the coast of Arabia Felix, immediately opposite to the island of Masuah and the port of Abyssinia. Here he remained until the 1st of September, when Mahomet Gibberti arrived, bringing with him the firman for the Naybe or governor of Masuah, and letters for Ras Michael, governor of the great province of Tigré in Abyssinia—a most singular personage, with whose character the reader will very shortly be better acquainted.

On the 3rd September they all sailed from Masuah, and on the 10th they passed the island of Gibbel Teir, which is about half way between the two shores. It is a volcano, was smoking, and was covered with sulphur and pumice stones. Bruce was suffering very severely from fever, and from the heat of the sun, which had almost brought on a *coup de soleil*,

when on the 11th, at noon, the vessel struck upon a reef of coral rocks, and for some hours they were totally unable to move her. They at last succeeded, and Bruce says, "we saw the advantage of a vessel being sewed rather than nailed together, as she was not only unhurt, but made very little water." During the confusion, and while the greater part of the crew were flying to prayers, instead of trying to save the vessel, the courage and exertions of Yasmine, a Moor, were much observed and admired by Bruce, who says, "from that day he grew into consideration with me, which continued ever after, till my departure from Abyssinia."

On the 14th they reached Dahalac, the largest island in the Red Sea, being thirty-seven miles in length, and eighteen in breadth, but low, and so barren, that several women and girls, entirely naked, swam off to the vessel before it came to an anchor, begging for handfuls of rice, dora, or wheat. These miserable people are sometimes a whole year without tasting bread. Yet they are so strongly attached to their parched, barren, naked home, that it is impossible to prevail upon them to leave it. "This preference," says Bruce, "we must not call strange, for it is universal; from Lapland to the line you find it written precisely in the same character."

On the 19th of September, 1769, a very important day in Bruce's life, his vessel came to an anchor in the harbour of Masuah (the ancient port of Abyssinia). He had been seventeen days in crossing the gulf, which is often done in three days, but much time was spent in surveying the islands.

Bruce's notes and observations during his voyages in the Red Sea, which we have passed over as being dry and uninteresting to the general reader, contain, nevertheless, facts and information of a very valuable

description. Besides endeavouring to determine the currents, the bearings of the different islands, the latitude and longitude of the principal points, Bruce surveyed a number of the harbours, and gave minute directions for ships to enter them ; as also to navigate the gulf or channel. His collections of marine productions, and his observations on the natural history of the Red Sea, were also very extensive. "I suppose," he says, "I have drawings and subjects of this kind equal in bulk to the journal of the whole voyage itself." Not satisfied with useful practical subjects, he voraciously encountered arguments of a more speculative nature—whether, for instance, the Red Sea is not higher by some feet and inches than the Mediterranean—where it was that the Children of Israel passed the Red Sea—what occasions polygamy among Eastern nations—what causes the currents in the different parts of the gulf, &c. &c.

Excepting at a few places, he landed but seldom, for the Abyssinian shore was desert, and the Arabian side very dangerous, being inhabited by a most barbarous people. On the one shore he could get nothing, on the other he knew that he would be robbed of the little he had. His observations were therefore mostly nautical, and if his description of the charts and pilots he met with be correct, his labour was at least well intended ; for the pilots of the Red Sea, he says, "are creatures without any sort of science, who decide upon a manœuvre in a moment ;" and of the charts, he says, "God forgive those who have taken upon them very lately to engraft a number of new soundings upon that miserable bundle of errors, that chart of the upper part of the gulf from Jidda to Mocha, which has been tossed about the Red Sea these twenty years and upwards ! I would beg leave to be understood, that there is not in the world

a man more averse than I am to give offence, even to a child. It is not in the spirit of criticism I speak this; but where the lives and properties of so many men are at stake yearly, it is a species of treason to conceal one's sentiments, if the publishing them can any way contribute to safety, whatever offence it may give to unreasonable individuals."

Lord Valentia has thought proper to declare that Bruce "never was below Loheia;" "that his voyage from Loheia to Babelmandeb is evidently a fiction;" "that his book partakes more of romance than reality;" "that he has so mixed truth with *falsehood*," &c. &c. &c. In a polite and civilised country, this style of language (most particularly from one fellow-traveller to another) deserves no reply—it is a poison which must carry with it its own antidote. Lord Valentia himself admits that several of Bruce's latitudes and longitudes are correct, but his lordship asserts that some are incorrect; and that some are even copied from Niebuhr. All men are prone to error, and it may or may not be true that Bruce sometimes without acknowledgment availed himself of the experience gained by those who went before him; nevertheless, the observations which Lord Valentia has thought it proper to make upon Bruce, are certainly not supported by the following extract from the journal even of his Lordship's own secretary, Mr. Salt. "During Captain Court's absence, I endeavoured to get as much information as possible concerning the place, and for this purpose, one of the elder inhabitants who had spent his life in piloting vessels to and fro, was brought to me by the Nayib's man. He confirmed to me the names of all the islands we had seen in the morning, which agree most perfectly with what Bruce has called them. He recognised every island, excepting two, mentioned

by Bruce, as I named them from the book." It is only due to Bruce, to repeat here the remark of Captain Keys, R. N., in whose vessel Lord Valentia and Mr. Salt first visited the Red Sea. "Mr. Bruce," says Captain Keys, "is a very accurate observer. I shall take *his* longitudes and latitudes."

Dr. Clark, in his travels to Egypt, &c., says, "The officers of General Baird's army spoke highly of the accuracy of Bruce's observations; and the General himself assured us, that he considered Great Britain as indebted to Bruce's valuable chart of the Red Sea, for the safety of the transports employed in carrying the British forces."

Many people still agree with Lord Valentia in maintaining very positively that Bruce never was below Loheia, and consequently that he never went to the Straits of Babelmandeb—because (they say) this part of his voyage is not mentioned in the private journal either of Bruce or his draftsman Balugani. But an eager traveller like Bruce has often, baffling all sober calculation, suddenly neglected everything to toil and hurry towards a barren spot, for the silly satisfaction of being able to say, or even to feel, that he has been there; and surely no man was more likely to do this than Bruce, whose whole life was spent in attempting to gain such trophies. Bruce declares that he left Cosseir with a determination to make a survey of the Red Sea, and steering direct north to Tor, his track proves the plan upon which he embarked. On his arrival at Loheia (Vide the sketch), he had sailed over nearly three-quarters of the gulf, and this being the case, is it not consistent with Bruce's general character to suppose that he should have felt a very strong inclination to conclude his survey—and most particularly to reach a point of such geographical importance as the

Straits of Babelmandeb, which were, comparatively speaking, close to him? And if it *is* likely that he should have entertained a feeling in which almost any phlegmatic person would have joined him, it must be evident that there was nothing to prevent him from effecting his project. He had time, wind, water, a vessel and provisions, and with an inclination to go there: what could he have asked for more?

As to the silence of the private note-books, Bruce might have drunk to the King's health in the Straits of Babelmandeb, till he could not see to make observations—he might have lost his observations—or, what is much more probable, being between a barbarous shore and a barren one, and under a burning sun, he might, after all his trouble, have found nothing to make observations upon, excepting the chasm or straits, the latitude and longitude of which he *did* take. Balugani might have been left at Loheia, to finish up the drawings which were on hand; ten thousand accidents might have occurred; but in truth it is merely childish to attempt arguing in this fashion upon the course or conduct of an eccentric man, who, had he belonged to his common gregarious tribe, would never have voluntarily undertaken a solitary course through deserts, and savage or uninhabited countries.

The reader is gradually, we hope, becoming acquainted with his real character: by that alone he must be judged; and if his character appears unsullied, in a civilised country, Bruce, with more truth than Brutus, has a right to say—"Believe me for mine honour, and have respect for mine honour, that you may believe!"

CHAPTER VI.

PREVIOUS to Bruce's landing at Masuah, the ancient port of Abyssinia, it would be proper and regular, if it were possible, to lay before the reader, not only a correct map of the country about to be visited, but also one showing its rank or situation in the continent to which it belongs. But of Africa in general it may justly be said, that ninety-nine parts of it out of a hundred are unknown; and that, from several points, a man might travel from the Mediterranean, very nearly to the Cape of Good Hope, and from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, over ground which has never been trodden or seen by any of our travellers.

Our map of Africa, therefore, however highly it may be coloured in the shops, is in fact little more than the sea charts of the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea. We have surveyed its coasts—we are acquainted with part of the Nile—and, in a very few directions, we have attempted to penetrate into the interior of the country, but it must be confessed that Africa is an immense blank in geography which remains to be filled up. Instead, therefore, of presuming to offer a map of this continent, we propose to attempt a short verbal description of its general features, with a few observations thereon; and as Bruce's memoranda on the topography and history of Abyssinia,

with little attention to arrangement, are scattered over the seven volumes of his travels, and would alone fill three or four times as many pages as the whole of this little book contains, we propose to add, to the above sketch of Africa, a very slight descriptive outline of the kingdom of Abyssinia, and an abstract of its history, up to the time when Bruce landed in the country.

We are but badly prepared to do justice to subjects of this description; but we feel it is impossible for the general reader, going merely step by step, like a man walking in the dark with a lantern, to judge of Bruce's life in Abyssinia, unless he previously takes into his consideration the general character and history of that country, and, moreover, reflects for a moment on the character of that continent of which it forms so small a part. We do not presume to instruct the reader—we only feel it necessary to bring before his mind scenes which, in common life, one has seldom occasion to consider.

SKETCH OF THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA.

The vast portion of the globe which we term Africa, is in length about five thousand miles—which is about the distance from the line to Iceland, or from Calcutta to the North Pole: in short, it is about one thousand miles more than the distance from the earth's centre to its circumference. The greatest breadth of Africa is very nearly equal to its vast length. This immense expanse of country, a true idea of which it is beyond the capacity of the human mind to contain, is situated in exactly the hottest region of our globe; for, from the equator, it is two thousand five hundred miles to its northern boundary, the Mediterranean Sea, and about the same distance to its southern extremity, the Cape of Good Hope.

The burning heat of both the torrid zones forms, therefore, the scorching climate of the middle portion of Africa; and the northern and southern extremities, its coldest regions, are, as we all know, nearer to the line than the most southern or hottest parts of Europe. To describe the climate, it may therefore, in general terms, not unjustly be observed, that what is marked by Nature upon our European scale of climate, as excess of heat, is all that the African knows of the luxury of cold, excepting that which is produced by elevation or evaporation.

Although Africa is thus sentenced to be eternally roasted before the sun, yet, if it were well watered, we are sensible that it would become a most productive, luxuriant garden, the superabundance of which Europe would scarcely be able to consume. But, although heat and water give this exuberant fertility to any description of soil, we also know that, without water (the blood of the vegetable world), the richest land remains a *caput mortuum*—*rudis indigestaque moles*—an inert, lifeless mass. Water being, therefore, an element of such vital importance in the production of vegetation, it becomes necessary to take a very short practical view of the tropical rains, which deluge the centre of Africa.

During the half-yearly visits which the sun pays, in succession, to the torrid regions on the north and south of the line, the air, heated by his presence, becomes rarified, and flies upwards; its place is immediately filled; and thus a constant rush of air, or, as we term it, a trade wind, is generated, which, being also influenced by the diurnal motion of the sun, is everlastingly flowing towards the equator. The air, thus rushing towards the sun, is, by heat, made capable of absorbing a greater quantity of water than it could contain in a colder state; and,

therefore, as soon as this air and vapour united rise into high and consequently freezing regions, a divorce between the two elements suddenly takes place; the air loses its power of retaining the vapour, which, being immediately condensed, becomes water—away flies its companion, the dry air, and, thus deserted, down it falls in what we term tropical rains, which, everlastingly accompanying the sun from one torrid zone to another, are, by a most wonderful provision of Nature, eternally assuaging the thirst which this immense mass of burning fire tends to create. The rains are always most violent where the sun is in the zenith; and, as a remarkable instance of the effect which they produce, it may be stated, that Bruce observed, when the sun was immediately over Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia, that the thermometer was invariably about twelve degrees lower than when the sun was in the southern tropic, thirty-six degrees from the zenith of Gondar: so happily does the approach of rain compensate for the heat of a burning sun! But, while the centre of Africa, or, to speak more correctly, a belt of about eleven hundred miles on each side of the line, is thus periodically deluged with water, yet, in the vast remainder of the continent, it may be said, with very few exceptions, that it never rains at all. The burning heat, and the unequal distribution of water in Africa being understood, the following picture of the country is the natural consequence.

Within the limits of the tropical rains, the country, rank from excessive heat and moisture, in some places is found covered with trees of most enormous size, encircled by kossom, and other twining shrubs, which form bowers of a most beautiful description, enlivened by the notes of thousands of gaudy birds, and perfumed with fragrant aromatic breezes. These

trees are often the acacia vera, or Egyptian thorn. They seldom grow above fifteen or sixteen feet high, then flatten—and, spreading wide at the top, touch each other, while the trunks are far asunder; and thus, under a vertical sun, for many miles together, there is a free space, in which both men and beasts may walk in a cool delicious shade. Other parts of this region produce coarse grass, high enough to cover a man on horseback, or a jungle, composed of high underwood and briars, which would be almost impervious to human beings, were it not for the elephant, and other great animals, which, crushing everything in their progress, form paths in various directions. In many places, the land is highly cultivated, divided into plantations, fenced as in England, possessing towns of more than thirty thousand inhabitants, and swarming with an immense population.

Strangely contrasted with this picture of the wet portion of Africa are its dry, lifeless deserts, composed either of mountains and plains of hot stones, or of vast masses of loose burning sand, which, sometimes formed into moving pillars by the whirlwind, and sometimes driven forward, like a mist, by the gale, threaten the traveller with death and burial, or rather with burial and then death—a fate which befel the army of Cambyses. In some places, however, the sand is found like a layer of mortar firmly cemented on the surface by an incrustation of salt, and it is in these scorching regions of salt and sand that the traveller experiences what he has emphatically termed “the thirst of the desert;” and yet, with all its horrors, the desert parts of Africa are more healthy, and afford a residence which is often more desirable than the rank luxurious regions; for the excessive rains bring into existence a number of flies, musquitoes, and ants, which not only torment the body, but even devour

the clothes. Denham says (vol. ii., p. 91)—“ After a night of intolerable misery to us all, from flies and musquitoes, so bad as to knock up two of our blacks, we mounted, &c. . . . Another night was passed in a state of suffering and distress which defies description: the buzz from the insects was like the singing of birds; the men and horses groaned with anguish. I do not think our animals could have borne another such night.” Besides producing these flies, the rains cover the country with extensive lakes, and, as far as the eye can reach, with immense miry swamps, which at first drive the wild beasts among the human race, and then putrify and corrupt the air—converting a verdant, smiling country, into what may be termed a painted sepulchre. In the desert, on the other hand, there are no flies; the air is comparatively healthy; and as the heat penetrates only a few inches into the ground, a cool bed can always be obtained after sunset, by clearing away the hot sand from the surface.

The moral outline of Africa is far more gloomy than the face of the country, which we have endeavoured to delineate. The whole of the interior (as far as Europeans have been able to judge, or rather to guess, from their slight acquaintance with it), may be said to be one scene of eternal civil war. Of the various tribes, nations, colours, and races of men, who inhabit this immense country, there is no one which has not its enemy; and the universal creed of Africa seems to be, that the freedom and happiness of one tribe rest upon the slavery and misery of the other. The Sultan of Mandara, on the marriage of his daughter, lately made an expedition into the Kerdy country: three thousand unfortunate wretches were thus dragged from their wilds, and sold to perpetual slavery.

Across scorching deserts, in which not a living animal, or even an insect, exists, in various directions are seen one tribe of human beings driving another to slavery. The unfortunate captives, who start in health, and, strange to say, even in spirits, gradually decline in both: their bodies become emaciated, their legs swell, until, as Denham says, "on approaching the wells, they run forward several miles, like things distracted, their mouths open, and eyes starting from their heads." The water they seek is sometimes brackish—the well itself is sometimes found to be dry—and around its exhausted source stand grouped this crowd of disappointed beings, surrounded by the countless skeletons of those whose captivity and whose troubles have alike ended—who have perished from thirst and fatigue—and whose bones the suffering camels of the *Cafila* are oftentimes seen to chew.

From the northern coast of Africa, where the Christian captive has so often ended his days in silent misery and anguish, down to the country of the Hottentots and Caffres (a space of about five thousand miles)—from the eastern mountains of Abyssinia to the waters of the great western ocean (a space of nearly four thousand miles)—we have every reason to believe that, throughout the whole of this immense country, the horrid system of slavery more or less prevails.

Now, it is very curious to reflect that the deserts, the pestilential climate of Africa, and the dreadful moral state of the country, are all effects of one and the same cause, namely, the unequal distribution of water.

No one will deny that the deserts of Africa would cease to be desert if they were watered—that the stagnant waters of central Africa, which now pollute the climate, would cease to be stagnant if they were

drained ; and, consequently, that the one country has a superabundance of an element necessary for vegetation, of which the other is greatly in need. With respect to the moral state of the country, it must surely, also, be evident that Africa is uncivilised, because its desert and pestilential regions encourage narrow prejudices, narrow interests, and evil passions, which would at once be softened and removed, if the inhabitants could be enabled to live in constant communication with each other ;—in other words, if the one country were to be irrigated and the other drained.

Our expeditions into Africa have hitherto had very narrow, trifling objects in view. The little history of Bruce's life will soon show that both ancients and moderns have been desirous to discover the true source of the Nile ; and the same petty problem, the same idle curiosity, regarding the course of the Niger, is still the subject of inquiry—"the grand problem" of the present day. Yet, if the moral and physical climate of Africa are everlastingly to remain as they are, what rational encouragement have we to attempt to penetrate a country which is pestilential and barbarous, in which we can neither live in health nor in security ?

If Africa is eternally to remain as it is, we surely know very nearly as much of it as rational beings ought to desire, for we can hardly sit down upon its western coast without dying. Our government, with the frankness and candour which distinguish it, have lately honestly told us that Sierra Leone, bad as it is, is one of the healthiest parts of the *coast*—the graves of our brave enterprising countrymen are beacons which faithfully warn us of the danger of the climate of the *interior*. Again, experience teaches us, that so long as men can easily escape from their

laws, a country must, to a very great degree, be lawless. We see it at this moment in the different governments of South America, all of which practically find that their countries are much too big for their laws, and, consequently, that their laws, being lost in space, are unable to govern their countries. It is true, that in fertile America, time and an increasing population will at last correct the evil; but in Africa, so long as such immense deserts exist, men must remain uncivilised, for their laws can never be made efficient.

But we have endeavoured to show, that if the stagnant waters of Africa, together with the immense rivers which have hitherto been wasted in the sea, could be imparted to the deserts; if the dry country could be irrigated, and if the wet one could be drained, this immense continent would gradually become the garden and the granary of Europe, and, with its water, wealth would circulate and civilisation flourish.

Now, with such a magnificent reward before us, it is certainly a question not unworthy of consideration, what reasonable grounds there are for supposing that such a vast project could be effected.

The first great argument which in propriety should most humbly be offered, is the universal belief that God has made nothing in vain, and that there is no obstacle to our full enjoyment of this earth which, sooner or later, we shall not, with his assistance, and by the surprising powers which are daily imparted to us, be enabled eventually to surmount. There was once a time when no man dared to imagine that the great ocean could be traversed in every direction; and we are also aware that America was carefully hidden from our view until our powers and our population had extensively increased. The great curtain of the west was then raised, and we were gradually made

acquainted with a portion of our globe, whose features, its mountains, rivers, and plains, are on so vast a scale, that in ancient times men would have been totally unable to have contended with them.

Seeing, therefore, that, in the great history of the world, different portions of the globe have at different periods successively been subjected to our use and dominion, it is surely reasonable to infer that Africa will eventually become "part and parcel" of the beneficent garden in which we are placed; and the very fact that our powers of steam and machinery are so rapidly increasing, that we literally can hardly imagine to what known obstacle we shall have occasion to apply them, tends to show that there must remain something very important in this world for man to do. In short, the enormous tools which Nature is placing in our hands, clearly foretell that she has some wonderful work for us to perform; and therefore, instead of calculating, as many people do, for instance, how long our coals are to last us, and in how many years hence we are unavoidably to be left in cold and darkness, is it not juster to believe, that, with our new powers, we shall obtain new resources, and that the wisdom of Nature will continue to bloom when the idle fears and theories of the day have faded and corrupted?

But to consider the subject in a more practical point of view, it may be observed, that in order to irrigate either a single field or a region of country, two things are required—water and a sufficient difference of level. Now, in Africa, there is every reason to believe that there exists both; for first, with respect to water, we know that the tropical rains deluge the central country, —all the rivers within the tropics being subject to periodical inundations. Of the enormous quantity of stagnant water, which, being pent up within the

tropics, is rapidly carried off by evaporation, and which might be used to irrigate the country, it is impossible to form any calculation; but the following memorandum will give a rough idea of the quantity of water which escapes from Africa into the ocean.

A MEMORANDUM OF THE RIVERS AND STREAMS OF AFRICA.

The only river of consequence which empties itself into the Mediterranean is the Nile. It is the longest river in the whole continent, being navigable about four hundred and fifty miles from the sea. The greatest velocity of the stream is three miles an hour.

The rivers in the Barbary States, which run into the Mediterranean and Atlantic, are very insignificant.

There is no stream deserving notice on the western coast from Marocco to the Senegal.

From the river Senegal, along the coast of Guinea to the equator, there is more water discharged into the ocean than from any other part of Africa—probably more than from all the rest of that continent put together. The Senegal has a course of about one thousand miles; is navigable for sixty leagues from its mouth, in all seasons; and, in the rainy seasons, vessels of one hundred and fifty tons can go two hundred and sixty leagues from the sea.

The next river of importance is the Gambia. It is navigable for vessels of three hundred tons for sixty leagues. The tide is felt, in the dry season, at the distance of two hundred and fifty leagues. For the first three months, even of this season, the current is so strong that vessels cannot ascend the stream.

The next river is the St. Domingo; then the Rio Grande, navigable for vessels about twenty leagues, and for large boats about forty leagues further. From this river, or more properly from the Gambia to the river Mesurado, the country being flat, the rivers are often united a considerable distance up the country, when they branch off, and discharge themselves into the sea in distinct streams.

The Mesurado is a large river, so is the Sierra Leone river. Then follow the Ancobar, St. John's, Volta, and Formosa rivers. The latter can be ascended twenty-eight leagues.

From Formosa river are the Rio dos Forçados, the Bonny, the New Calabar, the Old Calabar, and the Rio del Rey. These are very large rivers, and not well known. The country about here is low; and these streams intersect the land in every direction, and form numerous islands.

Turning southward is the river Cameroons, which has several

mouths, but its size has not been ascertained. Then succeed several smaller streams, till we arrive at the Congo or Zaire River, which is very large and rapid, discolouring the sea for a considerable distance, and tearing away large pieces from its banks.

South of the Congo, for about six hundred miles, there are several rivers of a good size; many of them will admit vessels of one hundred tons. After that, for about eight hundred miles, there is not a single stream of fresh water till we come to the Fish river. Then follows the Orange river, which, although it has a considerable length of course, does not discharge much water into the sea.

There are several considerable streams in the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, as well as on the east coast of Africa, the largest of which is the Cuamo or Zambese, which has a course of about one hundred and eighty leagues. The rest are much smaller, but none of these are well known, though many of them are large and deep at their entrances.

The Decra river, which runs into the Indian Ocean to the north of the equator, is very large at its mouth, and is supposed to take its rise in the mountains south of Abyssinia. Beyond this there are no rivers of consequence till we reach the Nile, and indeed it is not known that there is a single stream of fresh water discharged into the Red Sea.

Now, secondly, with respect to level, Bruce roughly calculated that the most southern part of Africa which he visited was nearly two miles above the level of the sea. Denham calculated that the Lake Tchad was about twelve hundred feet above the Mediterranean, and his last observation, in looking towards the south, was, that the ground was evidently still rising. But we know that all the great rivers of Africa take their rise very far in the interior, and that many of them flow or descend with great rapidity. It is therefore quite evident that the country from which they proceed, namely Central Africa, must be very considerably above the level of the sea.

It being true, therefore, that there are a series of vast tanks or reservoirs, placed by Nature above the thirsting deserts of Africa, the stagnation, as well as the rapid evaporation of which now pollute the cli-

mate, and also that a number of immense rivers of water flow out of Africa into the ocean, would it not be a problem better worth the inquiry of future travellers than insignificantly hunting the course of the Niger, to endeavour, by a scientific reconnoissance, to determine (*only in theory*, for theory must in this case long precede practice, and with the practice, *after all*, we can have little or nothing to do) what would be the difficulties attending the tapping of these enormous vessels; as also of applying tourniquets, upon those veins and arteries, which, eternally bleeding, have hitherto left a great portion of Africa destitute of vegetable life?

There can be nothing irrational in this project, for Nature herself has already set us the example, and shown us the effect; and we actually see in Egypt a triple harvest produced by water which has fallen within the tropics, and which has been conducted through the burning, sandy deserts of Nubia. We also, in that country, see the fertility which has been conferred by artificial irrigation, for which, in ancient times, even immense lakes were made. Moreover, in the history of Abyssinia, we shall shortly read, that (an exact survey having been made) one of the kings of that country, being offended with the Divan of Cairo, threatened to stop the cock which gave fertility to Egypt, and to turn his river (the Nile) elsewhere; which proves that he, living within the tropics, and consequently very capable of forming an honest practical opinion, conceived that he had power, even with his own slender means, of carrying his threat into execution. Besides this, in the year 1200, Lalibala, King of Abyssinia, actually did turn into the Indian ocean two streams which had before fallen into the Nile. Amha Yasous told Bruce that he had seen

the remains of these works, and the Portuguese ambassador, Don Roderigo de Lima, declared that he travelled in them for several days. But we know by what slender banks the ocean itself is in many places retained, and with what facility a great country may often be laid under water. The commandant of almost every little fortress on the continent of Europe has the power of flooding the country around him; and if water, with such facility, can be made to flow for the purposes of war and destruction, surely it might also be conducted for the benefit and happiness of mankind.

The difficulty or facility with which this great object could be effected, can only be determined by an actual reconnoissance. If it could in some places be easily effected (and surely there must be many parts where the rivers and waters of Africa could very easily be made to irrigate the country), the valuable information might be offered to those whom it most concerns; and if in other places the difficulties should prove to be greater than, with our present knowledge, could be practically surmounted, still we are to consider that as these difficulties, however great, will not increase, and as our powers positively do increase, future ages may be able to perform the task. To endeavour to cure the physical and moral disorder from which Africa is now suffering, would surely be a free and noble object for future travellers of all descriptions; for, go where they will, the problem is always before them, and flow where it will, the water would everywhere be gratefully received. In the attempt, whether successful or not, we should at least acquire a general knowledge of the whole country: at all events, it would have the incalculable advantage of breaking what may too truly be termed

the petty system of discovery now in vogue ; but, as the reader is about to enter Abyssinia, where he will reach the source of a great river which he will afterwards accompany to its mouth, he will have a fair opportunity of judging for himself, upon the importance or non-importance of what we are now bidden to call the "grand African problems of the day."

CHAPTER VII.

A short Description of Abyssinia.

THE kingdom of Habbesh, Abyssinia, or Ethiopia, the oldest monarchy in Africa, is a small, highly-elevated, mountainous district, lying in the middle of the north torrid zone, within the limits of the tropical rains, and surrounded either by low, hot, muggy woods, of enormous extent, by a small part of the Red Sea, or by the vast, unknown, trackless regions of Africa. This secluded spot, cut off from all communication with the civilised world, and imprisoned by poisonous winds, burning deserts of moving sand, and by people far more cruel and dangerous to the traveller than the horrid climate and country which they inhabit, is yet connected with Europe by two circumstances, that distinguish it from the rest of Africa. These give us a singular interest in its welfare, and inspire a natural curiosity to become acquainted with a country, which seems to be an exception to that general rule by which we look upon Africa as a vast, inhospitable portion of the globe—the soil, climate, and inhabitants of which are uncongenial to our nature. The two ties which thus sympathetically connect us with Abyssinia, are its river and its church: and it is certainly pleasing to reflect, that Egypt—the granary of the east, a field annually enriched by a triple harvest, a smiling, luxuriant garden, in a remote corner of the blank, lifeless desert of Africa—owes its fertility to a river

which, rising in a Christian country, may not unjustly be considered as a type of that religion, which, calmly proceeding on its course, is ever offering to the vast moral deserts through which it flows, peace, happiness, civilisation, fertility, present and future enjoyment.

Abyssinia, surrounded by enemies, expands and contracts in its dimensions with every victory or defeat ; but, in general terms, it may be said that it is about equal in extent to Great Britain. It is bounded on the north by Sennaar, and the great woods of the Shangalla ; on the south it is hemmed in by various tribes of the Galla nations, which almost bound it, also, on the west, and which, with the Red Sea, likewise encircle it on the east. Abyssinia, has, therefore, been compared to a bow, of which the Shangalla tribes on the north form the string, and the various nations of the Galla the arch. Abyssinia, thus environed, is, generally speaking, mountainous,—or, to describe it more minutely, it is composed of groups and ranges of very high mountains, overlooking the plains and deep valleys which surround them.

Before it is possible to give a clear idea of the climate of this country, there are one or two phenomena which it is necessary to describe. It is well known that, from Suez to Masuah, the ancient harbour of Abyssinia, and from thence even to the Strait of Babelmandeb, a chain of mountains runs nearly parallel to the western coast of the Red Sea. These mountains, on the north of Abyssinia, pass through the country of the Shepherds, and there separate vast districts, which, though exactly of the same latitude, have nevertheless a most remarkable difference in the period of their rains. Both countries are deluged with rain for six months in the year ; but the seasons on the two sides of these mountains are diametrically

opposite to each other. On the east side, or in the country which lies between these mountains and the Red Sea, it rains during the six months which constitute our winter in Europe; on the opposite side it rains during the whole of our summer months. On account of the violence of these rains, and from the fly that accompanies them, either region becomes, for six months of the year, almost unfit for the habitation of man; while the country, on the opposite side of the mountains, is teeming with luxuriance, and basking under the rays of a prolific sun. The shepherds, or inhabitants of these adjoining territories, availing themselves of this singular dispensation of Providence, annually migrate, or vibrate, from one side of the mountain to the other; thus, while one or other of these countries is eternally suffering from the rain and fly, the natives of both manage to enjoy a perpetual summer; and while their cattle are feeding, in the cool of the morning, on most luxuriant pasture, and, during the burning sunshine of the day, are browsing on exuberant foliage, a mere geographical line divides them from a land, deluged with a pouring rain, deserted by almost every living creature, and condemned to gloomy and cheerless solitude. It may easily be conceived that this wandering life of the shepherd creates predatory, pilfering habits; and the old Abyssinian proverb—"beware of the man who drinks two waters," agrees with our own experience, how badly men of roaming, unsettled dispositions are suited to the enjoyment of sedentary civilised life.

These periodical rains, which in themselves constitute one of the marvels of nature, produce another which is almost equally extraordinary; for as soon as the fat black earth of the mountains of Abyssinia becomes saturated with water, immense swarms of flies burst into existence; and, with the rains, assist

in driving almost every living creature from them. This insect, called by the Abyssinians *tsaltsalya*,



although it is scarcely larger than a common bee, becomes formidable from its immense numbers; and the buzzing sound of its arrival is no sooner heard than the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about the plain till they actually die from fear, pain, and fatigue. The camel, whose patience under every other affliction is proverbially unalterable, gets ungovernable from the violent punctures of these flies; his body becomes covered with lumps, which break and putrify; and the wretched creature, termed by the Arabs the "ship of the desert," founders and dies. Even the rhinoceros and elephant, whose hides have been considered almost impenetrable to a musket-ball, are severely persecuted by these "clouds of cossacks," but they instinctively fortify themselves against the attack by wallowing in the mud and mire, which, when dried by the sun, forms a fortress which their enemies are unable to storm. All the inhabitants of Melinda, down to Cape Gardfui, Saba, and the south coast of the Red Sea,—all the inhabitants of the countries from the mountains of Abyssinia to the confluence of the Nile and the Astaboras, are obliged annually to quit the country of black earth, and, driving their cattle before them, to seek refuge in the cheerless sands of the desert;

and so many human beings and huge animals thus flying before an army of such little flies, certainly forms a very remarkable and wonderful feature in the great picture of Nature.

Of all those who have written upon these countries, Isaiah is, we believe, the only one before Bruce, who has given an account of this fly:—"And it shall come to pass," says the prophet, "in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost parts of the rivers of Egypt, and they shall come and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys."

For one moment we must stop to observe that Bruce's account of the number and of the effect produced by these flies, is a part of his narrative which was long pointed at and ridiculed as being particularly unworthy of belief; yet the description already quoted from Denham (see our page 113) strongly corroborates Bruce's statement, which has also been confirmed by the testimony of the Abyssinian Dean, who was publicly examined at Cairo by Dr. Clarke. Besides this, we know that no man has ever yet been able to impart to his reader a just idea of the clouds of locusts, which, in some parts of the world, suddenly convert, for a hundred miles together, a green country into a brown one, to the total destruction of vegetable life. Bruce's account, therefore, of the havoc which the *tsaltsalya*, *zimb*, or fly of Abyssinia, produces among living creatures, however strange it may sound in this country, does not, in the natural history of the world, stand unsupported.

Why a portion of animal and vegetable creation should be afflicted with such a scourge as the *zimb* and the locust, why other parts of the world should be disordered by hurricanes and earthquakes, and why the whole of mankind should occasionally suffer

from pestilential disorders, &c., are problems which Bruce need not be called upon to solve. He has only added one to a number of facts, of which all we know is that they form parts of a wise and beneficent system which it is out of our power to comprehend.

Abyssinia being mountainous, lying in the middle of the torrid zone, and being also subject to the heavy periodical rains which have just been described, the effect naturally produced by these three causes is, that the climates of the high and low country are totally different. The mountainous or high land of Abyssinia, which, it may be observed, is covered with long grass, and destitute of wood, is at all times healthy, dry, cool, temperate, and is often even extremely cold; while the low woody country, unwholesome, hazy, close, and insufferably hot, suffers severely from a sickly, feverish season, which is invariably produced by the excessive rains. Part of this low country, however, is not covered with wood, and, though equally hot, yet being better ventilated, it is, generally speaking, healthy, as productive as Egypt, and is covered with most beautiful cattle of all descriptions; but where the waters of the rainy season, for want of level, stagnate on the plains, these hot swampy marshes produce no pasture, and are exceedingly feverish and unhealthy.

The little kingdom of Abyssinia, thus possessing within itself districts of such various climates, is inhabited by people of races and complexions as different as the soil and altitudes which they respectively occupy. In Abyssinia, royalty sits perched on the tops of the highest mountains; the great bulk of the community enjoy themselves on the sides of the hills, or in the wide, healthy plains; and in the hot, feverish, putrid atmosphere of the

low woods, one almost starts at meeting that wretched unfortunate being, the black, woolly-headed negro, who there, as in all regions of the world, finds that his neighbour and fellow-creature, pagan as well as Christian, is a more cruel, cunning, relentless, inveterate enemy, than the hyæna and savage beasts of the field.

THE SHANGALLA.

THE Shangalla of Abyssinia, the ancient Cushites or Ethiopians, occupy a low, flat, muggy country of dark, fat earth, which is, on an average, about forty miles broad. They are pagans, black, naked, and inveterate enemies of the Abyssinian government. During the first half of the year, the Shangalla live under the friendly shade of their own trees, the lower branches of which they bend downwards, and fix into the ground, thus forming a verdant tent, which they cover on the outside with the skins of animals. Living in this wild state, the forest is their city, its trees their houses. For food and amusement they hunt the elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and those other large animals which either inhabit their woody territory, or are found wallowing in the sultry pools which it encloses; and hence it follows, that where the forest is the broadest, the jungle the thickest, and the stagnant ponds the largest, there the tribes of the Shangalla are the strongest and most formidable. In those parts of the country in which the large animals do not abound, the Shangalla subsist on buffaloes, deer, boars, lions, and even serpents; in places where there is little wood, whole tribes of them eat the crocodile, fish, locusts, lizards, and ostriches—and thus they are still the rhizophagi, elephantophagi,

acridophagi, struthiophagi, agriophagi, which Ptolemy, in his account of the Ethiopians, has so accurately described.

During the summer the Shangalla tribes subsist on the animals which they catch; but in order to provide for the rainy season, they dry their food in a very singular manner. Venison and other flesh is cut into strips or thongs about as broad as a man's thumb. These are dried in the sun, until they resemble rough, tough leather; even locusts are dried and packed in baskets for the winter's consumption. Before the rainy season commences, they strike, or rather uncover their tents, leaving the boughs still pinioned to the earth, and thus bidding adieu to the skeleton of their deserted village, they seek refuge in caves which are rudely excavated in gritty, sandy rocks, so soft that they are often made to contain several apartments. As soon as the rains subside, the high grass which it has brought into existence becomes suddenly dry, brown, and parched; and being inconvenient to the Shangalla, they set fire to it. Flame rapidly extends over the country, and fire actually flows down ravines and gullies, in which, but a few weeks before, another element was seen rushing on its course!

The Shangalla have but one language, which has a very guttural sound. They worship trees, serpents, the moon, planets, and stars in certain positions. They have, of course, many superstitions—for instance, a star passing near the horns of the moon denotes, they conceive, the approach of an enemy. They have priests, but only to defend them from evil spirits; for to their good, benevolent spirits they fancy they may appeal without human assistance.

They are all archers from their infancy. Their bows, which are made of wild fennel, are usually

long and thick, and so elastic, that the same weapon is used in childish sports, which afterwards defends them when they grow up,—the only difference being that whereas, when boys, they are obliged, from its length, to hold the bow horizontally, the being able to bend it vertically is, among the Shangalla, the admitted sign of manhood. As a sort of religious, or rather superstitious, offering, they place on their bow a ring or strip of every animal they kill, and when the bow, covered with these rude trophies, becomes too stiff to be used, they carefully preserve it.

The old Shangalla has always, therefore, a number of these weapons in his possession. From them he selects a favourite one to be buried with him, in order that, when he rises again, he may not be at a loss to defend himself from his enemies; for these poor people, as we shall soon learn, are so accustomed to enemies in this world, that they cannot conceive that even a future existence can be without them; and yet rude and mistaken as their notions may be, we must all admit that there is no one idea more deserving of respect—which so directly tends to civilise the human mind, making all men act towards each other as brothers—than any belief, however uncertain, in a state of future existence.

It would be difficult to point out a more striking contrast than what is presented by the sedentary life of the negro or Cushite of Abyssinia, and the wandering habits of his neighbour the shepherd. The former, whether he lives in a tent or in a cave, moves only to avoid the zimb or the rain; the latter is always vibrating from one side of the mountain to the other, or else driving camels, laden with merchandise, across the burning deserts of Africa.

Although the Shangalla live in separate tribes, yet they are in the habit of joining together, and

of forming alliances offensive and defensive, but principally to assist each other in repelling the barbarous attacks which are made upon them by the Abyssinians and Arabs.

Mothers, who stand most in need of protection, naturally look for it to their own offspring; and it is a habit among these women, as among the Galla tribes, to entreat their husbands to entertain a plurality of wives, that, by the number of children in the family, the means of safety may be proportionally increased. Their moral character is nevertheless defended by Bruce with so much good feeling, that we must give it to the reader in his own words:—

“ I will not fear to aver, as far as concerns these Shangalla, or negroes, of Abyssinia (and, I believe, most others of the same complexion, though of different nations), that the various accounts we have of them are very unfairly stated. To describe them justly, we should see them in their native purity of manners, among their native woods, living on the produce of their own daily labours, without other liquor than that of their own pools and springs, the drinking of which is followed by no intoxication, or other pleasure than that of assuaging thirst. After having been torn from their own country and connexions, reduced to the condition of brutes, to labour for a being they never before knew; after lying, stealing, and all the long lists of European crimes, have been made, as it were, necessary to them, and the delusion occasioned by drinking spirits is found, however short, to be the only remedy that relieves them from reflecting on their present wretched situation, to which, for that reason, they most naturally attach themselves; then after we have made them monsters, we describe them as such!—forgetful that they are now not as their Maker created

them, but such as, by teaching them our vices, we have transformed them into, for ends which, I fear, one day will not be found a sufficient excuse for the enormities they have occasioned."

It would be well for the character of human nature, if we could here close the history of the Shangalla; but as yet nothing has been offered but a sketch of their *lives*: the account of their *death*, or what is even worse, of their *slavery*, remains still untold.

On the accession of every new king to the throne of Abyssinia, and on many other occasions, it has been the custom to amuse the country by a great hunting match, which lasts several days; and in this natural and manly pastime rewards are given, according to a fixed scale, for each of the wild beasts that are killed.

As soon as the hunting of the animals is concluded, licence is granted for a general hunt after the Shangalla, and exactly the same reward is offered for the murder of one of them as for slaying an elephant, a rhinoceros, or any other of the largest species of beasts.

The moment usually preferred for the persecution of these ill-fated people is just before the rains, while they are yet living in their vegetating tents, and before the soil of their country, by dissolving into mire, obliges them to seek refuge in their winter quarters.

In order to hunt these people, the Abyssinians, in overpowering numbers, and armed with every sort of weapon they can collect, enter the forest, and then, like hounds, they regularly draw the covers, which contain their game. The men of the Shangalla being extremely active, intelligent, and accustomed to the intricacies of their native woods, could

easily evade their pursuers, but each man, tethered by his affections to his own little family, can only retreat at the rate of the weakest, and they are consequently very soon overtaken by the Abyssinians. In the hot, gloomy, unhealthy recesses of the forest, far beyond the regions of civilization, out of the hearing of mercy, out of the sight of every nation that would rush forward to prevent such conduct, the sport or slaughter begins. The grown-up men are all killed, and are then mutilated,—parts of their bodies being always carried away as trophies; several of the old mothers are also killed, while others, frantic with fear and despair, kill themselves. The boys and girls of a more tender age are then carried off in brutal triumph; the former are afterwards to be found as servants in all the great houses in Abyssinia; the latter, the weaker sex, are dragged into more remote and distant countries, to be sold as attendants to the Turks, who profess to admire the Ethiopians in summer, because, like toads, they have a cold skin.

Any one who has ever had the misfortune to witness an African slave-market, and for a moment to stand surrounded by its wretched, emaciated victims, must, after his first feelings have subsided, have found himself filled with astonishment that human nature could ever be induced deliberately to continue so guilty a traffic! To account for it, or rather to excuse it, it has often been urged, that negroes are a race of inferior beings, whose minds are not susceptible of those painful sensations which we should suffer were we to be placed in their unfortunate condition. In short, to explain the problem, we paint the map of the world in our own way, and then gravely say, “the inhabitants of these (our countries) have acute feelings, and those who dwell in that

have none*!" But this strange assertion is most curiously contradicted by the history of the negroes, or Shangalla, of Abyssinia; for they and their enemies, the persecuted and the persecutors, absolutely live under the same sun, in the same country, separated only by a few hundred feet of elevation. No one can therefore rationally maintain, that these children of one family can be divided by feelings of such different degrees of susceptibility; for the Shangalla must surely enjoy freedom and liberty in the valley as much as the Abyssinians can enjoy them on the higher ground.

But the real truth is, that the sun is hotter in the lower stratum than it is in the upper. The human body, exhausted by its heat, becomes weaker—and it is because the Shangalla are weaker than the Abyssinians, and for no other reason, that the former are murdered and persecuted by the latter; and surely the African slave-trade rests on the same identical foundation.

THE GALLA.

THE Galla are a most numerous race of shepherds who inhabit the south, the west, and also parts in the interior of Abyssinia. As their land is high, and as the rains screen it for a considerable time from the sun, the general complexion of these Galla is brown, though some who inhabit the valleys of the lower country are perfectly black, with long hair of the same colour. They are divided into tribes, for every seven of which a king or chief is elected. There exists, also, a sort of rough nobility among

* The Chinese have a map which consists of a very large country, and a little speck; the former they say is "China;" the latter "the rest of the world."

them, whose ancestors have been raised to this dignity by valorous feats in war; and it is from these families alone that the chieftain can be chosen.

No one of these superiors can be elected until time has conferred upon him forty years of experience. However, in their savage calculation, the killing of an enemy is considered as equivalent to a year's experience, and therefore any noble becomes eligible for supreme command, when, between years of age and enemies slain, he has made up the number of forty. The Galla are almost all mounted on horses, which, from constant practice, they of course manage with great dexterity. In passing rivers they dismount, and grasp the tails of their horses, which tow them across. The assistance they thus receive does not exceed a few ounces; whereas, by remaining on horseback, they would subject animals badly adapted for swimming, and scarcely able to support themselves, to the extra burden of the whole of that part of their body which is above the water. Their arms consist of a shield made of bull's hide, and a long lance sharpened at the end, and then hardened by fire.

The attack of these wild people is very much dreaded by the Abyssinians; for, besides their cruelty, they utter, in charging, such a shrill, barbarous, frantic howl, that the Abyssinian horses are said to tremble with fear, in which their riders very readily participate.

When they march into the country of an enemy, they carry with them small balls about as large as pigeons' eggs, composed of a particular sort of bean, pulverised and mixed with butter; and it is affirmed, that, by eating one of these boluses, a Galla soldier can, in health and spirits, endure a whole day's fatigue.

Both sexes are rather below the middle size, but they are remarkably light and agile. The women are generally very prolific; and the sun which shines on the infant's birth seldom sets before the mother has resumed her occupations—such is the healthy state of savage life! The dress, or rather undress, of some of the tribes of the Galla, presents a costume which, although curious, has not yet reached our fashionable world. Round their persons they wind, as ornaments, the entrails of oxen, which also hang in festoons or necklaces from their throats. Their bodies are anointed with grease, poured so copiously on their heads that it melts, and, like our pomatum, is continually dropping on their shoulders, over which is thrown a piece of goat-skin. Like the Abyssinians, they eat raw meat; but Pierce, the English sailor, describes Galla who drank blood warm from the neck of the cow, yet, from an odd refinement, refused to eat the flesh of the animal until it had been broiled.

The Galla of the south are principally Mahometans, but those of the east and west are Pagans. The religion of the latter is very little understood; and it has, therefore, as usual, been said that they have none at all. However, it appears that the Wansey tree, under which their rude kings are crowned, is worshipped as a god by every tribe: there are also particular stones which they have been observed to venerate. They worship the moon and some of the stars—they have no idea of future punishment, but believe that, after death, they will live again and for ever.

Their form of marriage is as follows. The bridegroom comes to the parents of the bride with some food for a cow in his right hand, and he then very seriously and solemnly says—“May it never enter

the cow or leave her, if I do not perform my promise;" which is, that he will give to his young wife meat and drink while she lives, and bury her tidily when she dies.

As in the Abyssinian climate, girls marry at eleven, ten, and even nine years of age, and as there is no difficulty in supporting children, it is, by a Galla, reckoned creditable to be encircled by a numerous family; and, therefore, if his wife presents him with only a few children, she herself endeavours to persuade her husband to take, for her sake, an extra wife to assist her in surrounding him with his most natural protectors. To any objections which he may urge, she replies by naming and describing to him all the most fascinating girls of her acquaintance, particularly mentioning those who, in her opinion, would be most likely not to disappoint him. As soon as the husband relents, the wife's next singular occupation is to proceed to the house of the person selected, whom she requires from her family, that she may be her husband's wife, that their families may be joined together, and thus be strong enough in the day of battle not to fall into the hands of the enemy.

When this curious marriage, or rather codicil to the man's marriage, is concluded, the old wife keeps her precedence—treating her companion not as a rival, as would probably be the case in England, but as a grown-up daughter.

When the father, becoming old, is voted useless and unfit for war, he is obliged to surrender the whole of his effects to his eldest son, who is bound to support him; and in case this son dies, leaving a widow, the youngest brother of all is expected, out of respect to his memory, to marry her.

Bruce's description of the Galla horsemen, from

which the above sketch has been principally taken, was one of the many parts of his narrative which were very generally disbelieved, and yet no one can have witnessed the life of what we term the savage, without recognising, in Bruce's description, all those general lines which form the characteristic features of uncivilised life.

The disgusting dress, or ornaments, of the Galla tribes—their religion, their forms of marriage, &c. &c.—are certainly very unlike our own; but surely it is a very narrow prejudice to conceive that, in all climates and under all circumstances, the picture of uncivilised life must be always the same as that which has been delineated to us, or else be false! Bruce described the Galla tribes as intelligent, active, dirty, ignorant, and mistaken in their religious opinions; and this general description being strictly correct, the detail should certainly in justice never have been doubted. But Bruce unfortunately experienced that a man may suffer from barbarous prejudices and narrow-minded incredulity, long after he has bidden adieu to the company of the savage.

The uncivilised tribes which surround, as well as inhabit, Abyssinia, having been now described, the character of the Abyssinians themselves will appear in the following short abstract of their history.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Sketch of the History of the Kingdom of Abyssinia.

IT is a tradition among the Abyssinians, which they say they have had from time immemorial, and which is still equally received among the Jews and Christians of that country, that almost immediately after the flood, Cush, grandson of Noah, with his family, passing through Atbara, then without inhabitants, came to the chains of mountains which separate the flat country of Atbara from the mountainous part of Abyssinia. The tradition further says, that they built the city of Axum early in the days of Abraham; and that from thence they extended until they became (as Josephus says) the Merœtes, or inhabitants of the islands of Merœe.

While population was thus extending towards the north, it is supposed that the mountains parallel to the Red Sea, which in all times were called Saba or Azaba (which means south), became peopled with the Agaazi, or Shepherds, who first possessed the high country of Abyssinia, called Tigre, several tribes afterwards occupying the other provinces, many of which still retain particular languages of their own*.

In the most ancient of these languages, tribes, or assemblies of people, are called Habesh, which

* With very great difficulty, Bruce succeeded in getting the whole book of Canticles translated into each of these languages.

appellation was therefore supposed to have been given to the whole country now known to us by the name of Abyssinia.

The country of Saba, Azab, or Azaba, all of which mean south, was a separate, distinct people from the Ethiopians, or Arabs; and it was a custom among these Sabeans to have women for their sovereigns in preference to men.

One of these queens, called Balkis by the Arabs, and Maqueda by the Abyssinians, having heard not only of the wisdom of Solomon, but of the immense wealth which he had accumulated in the north, determined to witness the reality of scenes, to the description of which she had listened with so much delight; and, accordingly, this Queen of Saba, Azaba, or the South, suddenly appeared before Solomon. Pagan, Arab, Moor, Abyssinian, and, indeed, the inhabitants of all the countries round, vouch for this expedition very nearly in the language of Scripture, which states—"And when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions." Again—"The Queen of the South shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here."

It is said by the Abyssinians, that this Queen of Sheba, or Saba, left her country a Pagan, but that, having received Solomon's answers to the hard questions which she put to him, she returned converted to Judaism, and bringing with her a young child called Menilek. Both her new religion and her son Menilek, were, of course, attributed to the persuasions of Solomon; and it may here be observed, that both the Jews and Christians of Abyssinia still believe

that the fourteenth Psalm is a prophecy, not only of their queen's journey to Jerusalem, but that there she should have, by Solomon, a son, who was to be king over a nation of Gentiles.

The visit of the Queen of Saba to King Solomon is also detailed in the Koran, though strangely mixed up with Mahometan fancies, which give quite a ludicrous picture of the scene. The queen, in order to puzzle Solomon, is said to have sent him presents by five hundred young slaves of each sex, whom she artfully disguised, by dressing each set in the clothes of the other; but Solomon, a man of experience as well as wisdom, managed to detect the imposture. Again, in his turn, he is said by the Koran to have played off a trick on the queen. It had been reported to him, "that her legs and feet were covered with hair, like those of an ass;" and being curious to view this phenomenon, he caused his unsuspecting guest to enter a magnificent apartment, in the middle of which she found the king seated in splendour on his throne. The queen advanced to pay her respects; and the Koran declares, that when it was too late, Solomon said to her Majesty—"Verily, this is a palace evenly floored with glass."

The Abyssinians declare that Menilek, after residing some years with his mother, was sent by her to his father Solomon, to be instructed; that he then took the name of David, and was anointed and crowned, in the temple of Jerusalem, as King of Ethiopia. After this ceremony, he is said to have returned to Azab, or Saba, accompanied by a colony of Jews, and by a high-priest Azazias, who brought with him a Hebrew transcript of the Law. The moment had now arrived for the Queen of Saba to carry her great and hitherto secret objects into execution. Abyssinia was converted to the religion

of Jerusalem ; and, by the last act of the queen's reign, she settled a new mode of succession to the crown, which has very nearly existed to the present day.

She enacted, first, that the throne should be hereditary, in the family of Solomon, for ever ; secondly, that, on her demise, no woman should be capable of wearing the crown, which should henceforward descend to heirs-male, however distant ; and, lastly, that the heir-male of the royal house should ever be kept imprisoned on a high mountain, there to remain until their death, or until they should be called to the throne.

The queen having decreed that these laws should be irrevocable, died, after a long reign of forty years, in the year 986 before Christ. She was succeeded by her son Menilek, whose posterity, according to the annals of Abyssinia, and according to the belief of all the neighbouring nations, have reigned ever since ; their device being a lion passant, with this motto—" Mo ansaba am Nizilet Solomon am Negade Juda," which signifies, "The Lion of the race of Solomon and tribe of Judah hath overcome."

Separated from the present day by a race amounting to nearly three thousand years, the history of the Queen of Saba is unavoidably involved in great obscurity, and is distorted, as we have seen, by the absurd fables of the Koran ; yet the faint outline of her character denotes a mind possessed of superior abilities. Secluded in the remote country in which she reigned, it required considerable enterprise and determination to imagine, to say nothing of performing, the great journey which Scripture records her to have made ; and this desire to introduce herself into the society of her superior, and to become acquainted with a country in a higher state of civilisation than

her own, shows a liberality which, in every situation of life, has been always considered highly creditable. Her desire that her sex should deliver up to man, its natural guardian and protector, the dignity of command and the power of dominion, is also a remarkable trait in her character; and whoever may have been the father of her son Menilek, yet, in establishing a succession of heirs-male, it was certainly not impolitic to confer upon him dignity, in the real-or imaginary title of being descended from the wisest as well as one of the most powerful of kings.

With respect to her precaution of imprisoning all the heirs-male, in order to maintain a succession, this involves explanations respecting the habits and manners of the Abyssinians, which will better appear in another place; however, it may shortly be observed, that time is the best test of the fitness of any law, for the particular tribe or people for whom it has been invented, and therefore, that if this law has existed, as we are informed, for nearly three thousand years, and during that immense period has practically effected its object, by maintaining the succession, the Queen of Sheba may very fairly be considered as a person of wisdom, at least equal to many less ancient legislators, whose laws and whose families are alike extinct.

We must now leave the Queen of Sheba, like a star in the firmament, at the immeasurable distance at which she shines, and at once rapidly advance to scenes, which, because they are nearer, are likely to be thought better worthy of our attention.

About one thousand three hundred years after the death of the queen, and upwards of three hundred years after the birth of our Saviour, Meropius, a Greek philosopher, accompanied by Frumentius and Ædesius, two young men whom he had educated,

embarked on board a vessel in the Red Sea for India. As they were proceeding on their voyage, the vessel was wrecked on the coast of Abyssinia, and they were instantly attacked by the natives, who thus seemed more cruel than the rocks on which they had been stranded. Meropius was killed, and the two boys were taken as prisoners to Axum, which had been made the capital of Abyssinia by Menilek, who removed his court from its ancient residence at Saba, to a place near Axum, which is called "Adega Daid" (the house of David) to this day.

Frumentius and Ædesius, who had received a good education, in a short time learnt the language; and as soon as their talents and acquirements became known, they rose rapidly to distinction. Ædesius was appointed to be keeper of the king's household, and the care of the young prince was entrusted to Frumentius, who, after gradually gaining possession of the affection as well as the mind of his pupil, at last succeeded in imparting to him a love and veneration for the Christian religion; and as soon as this good feeling was firmly established, Frumentius obtained permission to depart, and hastened to St. Athanasius, at Alexandria, to whom he declared his belief that the Abyssinians might easily be converted to Christianity, if proper ministers were sent to instruct them. Athanasius listened to the statement with the earnest attention which it deserved; and in a very short time Frumentius returned to Abyssinia as Bishop of that country. He found the young king eagerly cherishing the religious hopes which he had been taught to entertain, and, encouraged by Frumentius, he now formally embraced Christianity.

His example instantly spread over the greatest part of the country, and never did the seed of the

Christian religion reach a more genial soil, than when it first fell among the rugged mountains of Abyssinia. There was no war to introduce it,—no fanatic priesthood to oppose it,—no bloodshed to disgrace it: its only argument was its truth, its only ornament its simplicity, and around our religion thus shining in its native lustre men flocked in peaceful humility, and hand in hand joined cheerfully in doctrines which gave glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.

Arianism, however, breaking out under the Emperor Constantius, he was applied to by Athanasius to recall Frumentius; but although the lightning of heaven had illumined Abyssinia, yet the thunder of the Roman Church was but faintly heard in so remote a region.

About one hundred and eighty years after the establishment of Christianity, a religious war is said to have taken place between the converted and unconverted Abyssinians (the Christians and the Jews). After this event, there is nothing of importance in the uncertain annals of Abyssinia for upwards of four hundred and forty years; but nine hundred and sixty years after Christ, a strong party was formed among the Jews, who, ever since the conversion of the race of Solomon to Christianity, had preserved on the mountain of Samem, on a healthy pinnacle which was named the Jews' Rock, a separate royal family of their own.

In the year 960, the Jews, supported by their king, and by his daughter Judith, a woman of great beauty and talents for intrigue, resolved to attempt the subversion of the Christian religion, and the destruction of the race of Solomon. They accordingly surprised the mountain of Damo, the residence of the Christian princes, the whole of whom, about

four hundred, were massacred, excepting one infant, Del Naad, who escaped into the powerful and loyal province of Shoa. A solitary representative of the blood of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba was thus preserved, to be again restored to the throne. The Jews, meanwhile, encouraged by their sanguinary victory, succeeded in interrupting the succession, and, contrary to the long-respected law of Abyssinia, Judith took possession of the throne, and not only enjoyed it herself for forty years, but transmitted it to five of her posterity, whose names are said to have been Totadem, Jan-Shum, Garcina-Shum, Harbai, and Maravi. On the death of Maravi, the crown descended to one of his relations, a Christian, and it is said to have remained in his family (who although Christians, were not of the line of Solomon) for five generations; however, about three hundred years after the murder of the princes, Tecla Haimanout, a monk and native of Abyssinia, who had founded the famous monastery of Debra Libanos, and had been ordained Abuna, or chief priest of Abyssinia, persuaded the reigning king nobly to restore the crown to the line of Solomon, which, as before stated, had been preserved in Shoa. A treaty was accordingly drawn up by Tecla Haimanout, by which it was agreed that the kingdom of Abyssinia should be resigned to one of the royal princes—that a portion of land should be given to the retiring sovereign—that one-third of the kingdom should be ceded to the Abuna (Tecla Haimanout himself), for the maintenance of the Christian Church of Abyssinia; and lastly, that no native Abyssinian should hereafter be chosen Abuna, but that that great officer should always be ordained and sent from Cairo—by which arrangement Tecla Haimanout wisely intended to secure to his church the incalculable advantage of

always having at its head a man independent of the narrow prejudices and interests which would probably govern any native of Abyssinia, and who would also bring into the secluded country the books, knowledge, and improvements of the more civilised world.

This treaty being concluded, a prince of the race of Solomon was peacefully restored to the throne of his ancestors, and the name which he assumed—"Icon Amlac," which means, "Let him be made our sovereign," was but the expression of the general approbation which attended the measure. The prison for the princes of the blood of Solomon was established on the summit of the mountain of Geshen, in the province of Amhara, instead of being as it was, for the space of two hundred years before the massacre of the princes, on the rock of Damo, in Tigré.

We need not linger over the petty wars and provincial troubles which make up the Abyssinian history of several succeeding generations. About the year 1418, Prince Henry of Portugal, who was half an Englishman, being the youngest son of John I. of Portugal, by Philippina, sister of Henry IV. of England, having long turned his attention to astronomy and the higher branches of mathematics, prevailed upon his father to attempt a passage to India, by sailing round the continent of Africa: and while this expedition was, by slow degrees and by repeated voyages, groping its way over the vast expanse of the Atlantic ocean, Prince Henry suggested that, in case of disappointment, it would be well to attempt also to reach India by land; for it had long been reported by Christians from Jerusalem, that monks occasionally resorted to the holy city who declared themselves to be the subjects of a Christian prince, whose dominions were in the heart of Africa. The king of Portugal, therefore, deter-

mined to send ambassadors in search of this country, which was supposed to be governed by Prester John; and, accordingly, Peter Covillan and Alphonso de Paiva sailed for Alexandria, carrying with them a rude map which had been constructed under the direction of Prince Henry. Embarking on the Red Sea, they sailed beyond the straits of Babelmandeb. Alphonso de Paiva died, but Covillan, after a series of adventures, reached Shoa, where the court of Abyssinia then resided; and here he was greeted by the fatal intelligence, that an ancient law of the country forbade him ever to revisit his native air; that no stranger was ever permitted to depart—that Abyssinia was but too truly the bourne from which no traveller returns—and Covillan, in fact, never did return to Europe.

He was, however, very well treated by the king and his people, and was permitted to send to Portugal descriptions and plans of all his discoveries, which he most eagerly recommended to be followed up by other expeditions from his country. But the foundation upon which he was building all his hopes suddenly gave way. Cape Tormentoso—the Cape of Good Hope, was doubled, the barrier to India was thus broken down, and the journey by land, as well as the importance of Abyssinia, were alike neglected and forgotten. During two reigns, Covillan remained quietly at Shoa, but the Abyssinians then becoming embroiled in a war with the Turks of Arabia, entreated Covillan to request the assistance of Portugal, the King of Abyssinia promising that, as soon as his throne was re-established in security, he would submit himself to the Pope, and resign one-third of his dominions to the Portuguese. A letter was accordingly despatched by an Armenian merchant named Mateo, who, after encountering, for many years, difficulties

which often appeared to be insurmountable, at last succeeded in reaching Portugal, where he was received with every mark of attention and respect. A very numerous embassy was accordingly sent out from Portugal, and, landing at the north of Abyssinia, on the 16th of April, 1520, Don Roderigo, the ambassador, his numerous retinue, and Mateo the Armenian (all equally ignorant of the country, rashly resolved to proceed by land to the king), who was in one of the southern districts of his dominions. They crossed the whole extent of the empire, passing through unknown woods and mountains, "full of savage beasts, with men more savage than the beasts themselves," and intersected by large rivers which were daily swelling by the tropical rains. They had occasionally to pass deserts in which no sustenance was to be found either for man or beast. At last they were placed in a situation which, by their description, appears still more dreadful; for in their journey to the convent of St. Michael, the wood, or jungle, became so thick, that it was almost impossible to penetrate it—thorns and briars impeded their progress—unlooked-for ravines suddenly yawned beneath them—mountains upon mountains were towering above them, their black and bare tops appearing as it were calcined by the rays of a burning sun, and by the incessant lightning which, at intervals, was flashing around them.

As the little band proceeded, terrified even at the thunder which was resounding in their ears, tigers and other wild beasts occasionally presented themselves, their hunger appearing to be for the moment appeased by astonishment—immense baboons hurried by, clambering up the trees, as if eager to view creatures who so strangely resembled themselves. At last the woods grew thinner, and some fields

appeared, but Mateo and Don Roderigo's servant, worn out by fear, fatigue, and fever, became unable to proceed—and died.

After various troubles the embassy reached the king at Shoa, on the 16th of October, 1520; but bringing no presents (it was with no little difficulty that they had been able to bring themselves), they were received with very cold civility. After having explained the object of their mission, the king was anxious to return an answer to Portugal, and, contrary to the custom of Abyssinia, he at last allowed Don Roderigo to return, though he forcibly detained several of his attendants.

Roderigo safely reached Lisbon with Zaga Zaab, ambassador from the court of Abyssinia. About twelve years afterwards, the Abuna, or Patriarch of Abyssinia, an imbecile old man, being at the point of death, the king, for political as well as religious reasons, prevailed upon him to nominate as his successor John Bermudez, one of the Portuguese who had been detained in the country ever since Roderigo's arrival. Bermudez, anxious to revisit Europe, consented to accept the office, provided he received the approbation of the pope; and the king, being hard pressed in his wars, and fully aware of the value of European troops, proposed that Bermudez should go first to the pope, and then to his own court, to solicit for Abyssinia the assistance of Portugal. After some difficulty, Bermudez set out for Rome, and, arriving there without accident, was confirmed by Paul III., as Patriarch not only of Abyssinia, but of Alexandria likewise; nay, gratified at receiving a mission from a Christian state so remote that he had hardly been aware of its existence, the pope lavished on Bermudez the additional and incomprehensible title of "Patriarch of the Sea." With these

distinctions Bermudez proceeded as ambassador from the king of Abyssinia to Lisbon, where, on his arrival, his titles were all acknowledged, and he himself treated with corresponding attention. His first act was to give the Portuguese a specimen of Abyssinian discipline, by putting Zaga Zaab in irons, for having wasted so much time without effecting the objects of his embassy.

Bermudez then addressed the king of Portugal, and he drew such a picture of the wealth and power of Abyssinia—of the advantages which would be derived by an alliance with so remote and magnificent a country, that the king promised to give him the assistance of four hundred troops; and many more than that number eventually landed at Masuah, and advanced into Abyssinia under the command of Don Christopher de Gama.

After marching for eight days to meet the king, Don Christopher received a message from the Moorish general full of opprobrious expressions, to which he returned a contemptuous answer, and on the 25th of March, 1542, these rival commanders came in sight of each other at Aerial, a small village in the country of the Baharnagash. The Moorish army was composed of a thousand horsemen, five thousand foot, fifty Turkish musketeers, and a few pieces of small artillery. Don Christopher's forces consisted of three hundred and fifty Portuguese infantry, and about twelve thousand Abyssinians, with a few horsemen badly mounted, commanded by the Baharnagash, and Rohel, governor of Tigré. A slight action ensued which terminated in favour of Don Christopher; on the 30th of August he again offered battle to the Moorish general.

The Portuguese had, early in the morning, strewed loose gunpowder in front of their line; on the first

approach of the enemy they set fire to it, which burnt and frightened them very severely; however, the Abyssinians shortly afterwards giving way, the little band of Portuguese was instantly surrounded. Gallantly they resisted the heavy attack that was made against them; however, Don Christopher being wounded, they cut their way through their enemy and retreated. During the night, Don Christopher crawled into a wood alone, where he was shortly discovered by some Moorish cavalry, who, delighted at the prize, immediately carried him before their general. This worthy no sooner saw his prisoner than he loaded him with reproaches. Don Christopher, who was as impetuous as he was brave, replied in terms full of indignation and contempt; and this so enraged the Moor, that he flew upon his defenceless prisoner, and, with his own hand, cut off his head. The body of this brave man was severed into pieces, which were forwarded to different parts of Arabia, and the skull was packed off for Constantinople—the tribute of a barbarian to his superior in barbarity.

The victorious Moors then surrounded and attempted to gain possession of a number of women who belonged to their enemy; but a noble Abyssinian lady, who was married to a Portuguese officer, aware of the brutal character of the Moors, touched with fire some barrels of gunpowder, which were in the tent; a dreadful flash—a terrific explosion took place, and the fears of the one sex, and the savage passions of the other, were in one second lulled to rest for ever!

The king expressed his unfeigned sorrow at the tragic fate of Don Christopher, and sent three thousand ounces of gold to be divided among the survivors of the Portuguese, who flocked around

his throne, earnestly praying him to lead them to revenge the death of their commander; and this they had shortly afterwards an opportunity of doing, in a battle in which the Moors were defeated with great slaughter.

But while the Portuguese troops were thus fighting for the Abyssinian cause, their religion, from the conduct of Bermudez, was becoming unpopular. For a long time the distinction between the Roman Catholic and the Abyssinian, Greek, or Coptic system, was too trifling to be observed. The Portuguese and the Abyssinians not only intermarried, but their children, in happy innocence, were christened sometimes by the ministers of one church and sometimes by those of the other: but Bermudez, with the natural acidity of a monk, soon corroded this fair, shining surface. However, although his narrow policy for some time disturbed the country, yet it at last reacted: the king in public firmly resisting his arguments, the flame which Bermudez had kindled was felt only by himself; and, "like the scorpion girt by fire," he then turned his venom into his own veins.

Deserting society, sullen, forlorn, and neglected, for some time he attempted to occupy his mind by saying daily mass to about ten miserable individuals. He then repaired to the port of Masuah, and at last, in squalid insignificance, this "Patriarch of the Sea" embarked upon his fickle element, and quitted Abyssinia for ever.

About this time, St. Ignatius, the founder of the order of Jesuits, was at Rome. To his enterprising and extensive mind the conversion of Abyssinia to the Roman church seemed of so much importance, that it is said he proposed himself to go and be the apostle of that kingdom. The pope, who required

Loyola's talents for higher purposes, refused this offer; but one of his fraternity, Nunez Baretto, was fixed upon as patriarch. On his arrival at Goa, however, the king's steady aversion to the Catholic church being communicated to him, he resolved not to risk his own patriarchal dignity, but to send Andreas Oviedo, Bishop of Hieropolis, and Melchior Carneyro, Bishop of Nice, with several other priests, as ambassadors to the court of Abyssinia. These ecclesiastical forces arrived at the port of Masuah in 1558. The king, fancying that they were Portuguese troops who had come to fight for him, received their credentials with marks of very great delight; but when, on opening the document, he found that the bill of lading mentioned nothing but priests, his countenance fell, and he became much troubled, "wondering," he said, "that the king of Portugal should meddle with his affairs:" and adding, "that he and his ancestors had paid obedience only to the chair of St. Mark, and acknowledged no other patriarch than him of Alexandria." The king and Oviedo had a violent discussion in public, which of course ended in the defeat of the latter, who, for a considerable time, lived in great obscurity. On the death of the king, however, his successor received the congratulations of Oviedo; but hearing that he still continued to preach, and to cause divisions and animosity among the people, he called him again into his presence, and ordered him to desist. Oviedo refused; and the king, losing his temper, very improperly beat him with great violence, and then banished him to a desert mountain.

After the departure of Bermudez, the Catholic religion became destitute of support—the fathers, who had remained in Abyssinia, being dead, and the gate

of the kingdom being closed by the violent animosities of the Turks, and by the cruelties they exercised on any missionaries who fell into their hands, the few Catholics that remained in these regions were only lingering out a wretched and hopeless existence. Affairs were in this state, when, in the year 1600, Peter Paez, the most enterprising, enlightened, and successful missionary that ever entered Ethiopia, landed at Masuah. He had been taken by the Turks in the Red Sea—had just escaped from seven years' imprisonment—and adversity had thus given him a severer lesson and a clearer knowledge of the world than is generally imparted to any of his fraternity. On landing at Masuah, instead of rushing forwards with hasty, intemperate zeal, in the hope of converting all at once a country, the language, habits, and prejudices of which he had hitherto only read about, he calmly and deliberately set himself to work to learn the Geez, or written language. He then set up a school, which gave him in secret, and without fear of danger, a thorough insight into the Abyssinian character; and, after he had thus cautiously practised upon the minds of the young and unsuspecting, he at last felt himself prepared to encounter by argument and persuasion the passions and prejudices of the Abyssinian court. In April, 1604, Peter therefore presented himself to the king, who received him with the same honours that he bestowed upon his own people of rank, a distinction which the monks of the Abyssinian church viewed with very great jealousy, as they clearly foresaw that this exaltation of Paez would eventually be the cause of their own humiliation. Mass was now said according to the ritual of Rome; and a sermon followed, which was almost the first ever preached in Abyssinia. Paez's language was so elegant, and his arguments sounded so con-

vincing, that the king resolved to embrace the Catholic religion; and, guided by Paez, he afterwards went so far as to write to Pope Clement VIII. and to Philip III. of Spain, to beg for Jesuits to instruct his people.

What a useful lesson is here offered to those who superintend the departure of missionaries from this country! Their maxim has been but too often quantity, not quality; whereas we here see that a solitary individual, by carefully making himself acquainted with the country, and by cautiously proceeding, effected more than all the parties which had preceded him. Many of the courtiers followed the royal example. Latin prayers were now mumbled—mass was said—the incense smoked—the host was raised—the little bell rang in triumph. However, a party was suddenly raised against Paez: the Abuna not only declared him to be excommunicated, but cursed all those who had supported, or should support, him or his cause. A battle was in consequence fought, and the king of Abyssinia, the first who had publicly avowed the Popish religion, died in the field.

After a bloody series of changes and contests, in the course of which another sovereign had fallen, Socinios succeeded to the throne, and began his reign with professions of moderation and neutrality. He, however, very soon privately professed to believe in the Catholic religion, and Paez, thus encouraged, asked the king for the territory of Dembea. This province, lying round the great lake Tzana, is the most fertile and cultivated country in Abyssinia. It is entirely flat, and seems to have been produced by the decrease of water in the lake, which, from very visible marks, appears to have once covered four times its present surface. Dembea, although fruitful,

has, however, one inconvenience, to which all level countries in this climate are subject; a mortal fever rages in the whole extent of it from March to November. On the north side of this lake, the country rises towards a rocky promontory, which forms a peninsula running into the lake. Nothing can be more beautiful than this small territory, moderately elevated above the water which surrounds it on every side but the north. Its climate is delightful, and no fevers or other diseases rage within it. The prospect of the lake and distant mountains is magnificent beyond European conception, and nature seems to have pointed out this lovely place for pleasure, health, and retirement.

As soon as Paez had obtained possession of his territory, he began to build a convent. He had previously not only made tools of the European shape, but taught several of the natives how to use them; and accustomed to very rude habitations of one story, the Abyssinians, to their utter astonishment, now beheld the rapid erection of a stately fabric of stone and lime. Paez was soon requested by the king to build for him a palace, which he readily undertook, and, as story was mounted upon story, the fame of the builder very justly increased. This feeling Paez artfully exerted all his abilities to turn to the advantage of the See of Rome;—but his attempt caused most violent disputes; and the mild principles of Christianity were forgotten and disgraced on both sides. The chief point of controversy, between the Coptic and the Romish priests, was, the number of natures in Christ. The Abuna declared that no one could be saved who believed in more than one; the Catholics, that those who did not believe in two were damned to all eternity, and that the flames of hell were eagerly burning to cleanse and purify them of

their errors. These dreadful opinions were soon expressed otherwise than by words. In a short time the bleeding head of the Abuna, or Patriarch of Abyssinia, was sent, as a religious offering, to Socinios, who, hearing a monk deny the two natures of Christ, put a full stop to his heresies by cutting out his tongue; while, on the other side, La Selasse, a priest of Selado, refusing to deny the two natures of his Saviour, was instantly stabbed with lances, and died, exclaiming, God and Man! God and Man! God and Man!

A rival king now stood up to oppose Socinios, and the whole country was filled with rebellion and bloodshed. Socinios resolving publicly to renounce the Alexandrian faith, and to profess the Catholic religion, Paez most willingly came forward, and with great pomp received his confession. Delighted that his great object was at last attained, Paez, during the heat of the day, returned to his house with his head uncovered, triumphantly singing, "Nunc dimittis!" "Lord! now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" and thus, roasted externally by the sun, and internally burning with fanatic zeal, he was taken violently ill, and died of a raving fever on the 3rd of May, 1623. Paez acted under mistaken principles, but his character ranked high in Abyssinia, and having really meant well, it is undeserving of disrespect.

After the death of Paez, Alphonso Mendez, a Jesuit doctor of divinity, and a man of great learning, having been ordained at Lisbon on the 25th of May, 1624, reached Abyssinia the following year. Accompanied by several missionaries, they experienced very great difficulties and dangers in crossing the country to join King Socinios; until, according to their own account, a star descended from the firma-

ment and showed them the road. When they reached Socinios, he ordered Mendez to be placed on his right hand, and, at that very audience on the 11th of February, 1626, it was settled that the king of Abyssinia should take an oath of religious submission to the See of Rome. This impious, vain, and ridiculous ceremony was celebrated with all the pageantry of a heathen festival. The palace was adorned with great pomp, and Mendez there preached a sermon to the king and to his people, in Portuguese and Latin, not a word of either of which languages could they comprehend. In return, a sermon was preached to Mendez, and to the missionaries who attended him, in the Amharic, not a syllable of which could they understand. When this prelude was over, Mendez advanced, holding in his hand the New Testament, and upon that sacred volume Socinios, the degraded king of Abyssinia, was made to take the following oath, the Jesuit Mendez standing by his side :—

“ We Sultan Sequed, Emperor of Ethiopia, do believe and confess, that St. Peter, prince of the Apostles, was constituted by Christ our Lord head of the whole Christian Church ; and that he gave him the principality and dominion over the whole world, by saying to him, ‘ Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church ; and I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.’ And again, when he said, ‘ Feed my sheep.’ Also we believe and confess, that the Pope at Rome, lawfully elected, is the true successor of St. Peter the Apostle, in government ; that he holdeth the same power, dignity, and primacy, in the whole Christian Church ; and to the holy father, Urban VIII. of that name, by the mercy of God, Pope, and our Lord, and to his successor in the government of the Church, we

do promise, offer, and swear true obedience, and subject with humility at his feet our person and empire; so help us God, and these holy gospels."

What an abject picture is here before us! and what a melancholy alteration has taken place in the countenance of the Christian religion, since we saw it first established among the simple inhabitants of Abyssinia! The Gospel, then, descended among them to be their companion and their guide. No tawdry ceremonies introduced it—it required no vain pomp to support it. We now see the same volume used for a purpose which can only produce war and misery—the hand of a Jesuit has delivered it to the Abyssinian king, that on it he may swear obedience to the See of Rome—as if the great road to everlasting life was from all countries to be made crooked for the sole purpose of passing through the muddy waters of the Tiber, and as if its portal was only to be entered by those who could produce a musty certificate from a decrepit pope, that they had faithfully believed in him, and had also eaten bad eggs and fishes on a Friday!

As soon as the oath was concluded, one of the king's governors drew his sword, and with mistaken zeal, swore that he would punish with that weapon any one who should fall from his religious duties; and that he would even be the greatest enemy of his prince if he should desert the Catholic faith. These declarations were repeated by many of the officers of state. A solemn excommunication was then pronounced against all who did not keep the oath, and a proclamation was immediately made, that all persons intended for priests should first embrace the Catholic religion under pain of death; that all should follow the forms of the Church of Rome in the celebration of Easter and Lent, under

the same dreadful penalty—and thus ended this fatal ceremony. Mendez, however, vigorously prosecuted his success. The Abyssinian clergy were reordained, the churches reconsecrated, grown men as well as children were again baptized, the feasts and festivals of the Church of Rome were established, and the forms and tenets of the Alexandrian faith were abrogated.

But Mendez had now overacted his part: unlike Paez, he had neglected to make himself competent first to lead the people whom he so hastily desired to drive; and in a short time a violent reaction naturally took place. The Abyssinians, still simple in their habits, and long accustomed to the placid enjoyment of unaffected devotion, soon felt that there was no real satisfaction to be derived from chattering prayers in words which they could not comprehend. The king, meanwhile, finding that his own power was gradually diminishing, and that he was losing the affections, as well as the obedience, of his subjects, patiently listened to their complaints; impressed by the native eloquence with which they insisted on their right of addressing the Almighty in their own language, he at length yielded to their request; and, though he himself continued to follow the tenets of the Church of Rome, declared that, by his people, prayers need no longer be uttered in a foreign tongue.

This concession, apparently simple and unobjectionable, was fatal to Mendez's views. It was by forms and ceremonies that he had proposed to govern; and, therefore, forcing him to be intelligible was, in fact, depriving him of his armour.

As long as he was able, he obstinately resisted; but the voice of the people so resounded in his ears, that he was very shortly obliged to pretend to submit,

although, in secret, he still did everything in his power to support his system. Abyssinia thus again became, as might naturally be expected, a scene of war; and Tellez, the Portuguese historian, has published a long list of the names of those who died in Abyssinia, martyrs to the Catholic faith. Many battles were fought; and, for a considerable period, Socinios, who still strenuously supported the religion of Rome, met with continued defeats; until adversity, that stern, useful monitor, at last explained to him the error he had committed.—“These men whom you see slaughtered,” said one of his nobles rudely to him on a field of battle, “were neither Pagans nor Mahometans: they were Christians, once your subjects and your friends. In killing these, you drive the sword into your own entrails.” Still, however, the Jesuit Mendez hovered around him, and for some time succeeded in keeping him under arms; but the spell was at last broken, and Socinios, seeing that his subjects were all deserting him, issued, on the 14th of June, 1632, the following singular proclamation:—

“Hear us! hear us! hear us! First of all, we gave you the Roman Catholic faith, as thinking it a good one, but many people have died fighting against it, and lastly these rude peasants of Lasta. Now, therefore, we restore to you the faith of your ancestors: let your own priests say their mass in their own churches; let the people have their own altars for the sacrament, and their own liturgy, and be happy! As for myself, I am now old, and worn out with war and infirmities, and no longer capable of governing: I name my son, Facilidas, to reign in my stead.”

Thus, in one day, fell the whole fabric of the Roman Catholic faith and hierarchy in Abyssinia.

The efforts made to introduce it were both violent and unnatural: it never suited the simple habits of the people; and it was more from their good nature than from conviction, that it ever seemed to have taken root. Socinius lingered for two or three months, and though he was a weak prince, yet his last act forms the best apology for his reign, for he died, firmly professing himself a catholic to the last—and however mistaken may be the conduct of any man upon a subject of religion, yet no one can refuse him honour when he thus vindicates his sincerity from all suspicion.

As soon as the new king had buried his father Socinius, he began to compose those disorders which had so long distracted the country from difference of religion. Accordingly, he at once wrote to Mendez to inform him that the Alexandrian faith being now restored, his leaving the country had become indispensable. He therefore commanded him and the Catholic priests to retire to Fremona, there to await his further pleasure.

Mendez, by subtle arguments, persuasions, and, lastly, by entreaties, endeavoured to evade, or at least to defer, the execution of this mandate; but his words were now powerless, and he was bluntly informed that, if he did not depart, the time might arrive when it would be too late for him to do so.

He and his companions were accordingly conducted by a party of soldiers. On the road they were robbed and ill-treated, their guards conniving at the attack; and at the end of April, 1633, they reached Fremona. Among the Jesuits, who accompanied Mendez, was Jereme Lobo, one of the most bigoted of the Portuguese, yet a man of enterprise and talent, who had travelled over the greatest part of Abyssinia. For a short time it was determined by these banished

monks to send Lobo to India, or Spain, to solicit troops for the country; the last forlorn hope of the Jesuits being, that soldiers might be able to point out with their bayonets, in such a manner as to secure instant conviction, the simple principles and disinterested doctrines of the Church of Rome. However, the king, perfectly aware of all that passed, ordered the Jesuits at once to set out for Masuah. On receiving this command, they managed, at the suggestion of Jereme Lobo, to escape to the protection of a man of considerable power, who favoured them. The king wrote to this person, and desired him to give them up: this he declined to do, but, by an odd sort of compromise, agreed instead to sell them to the Turks.

The whole gang were accordingly, for a certain sum, delivered to the Basha of Masuah—a very fit person to purchase such a cargo. As soon as this intelligence reached Europe, the loss of Abyssinia to the See of Rome was a subject of most violent discussion in the circle to which it belonged. Many of the Catholic clergy insisted that the failure had proceeded from the pride, obstinacy, and violence of the Jesuits; and it was therefore determined at Rome to send to Abyssinia six French Capuchins of the reformed order of St. Francis.

Two of these attempted to enter Abyssinia from the Indian Ocean; but shortly after their landing they were massacred. Two succeeded in penetrating Abyssinia, and they thus gained martyrdom by being most barbarously stoned to death. The other two, full of that part of valour which is termed discretion, gave up the attempt, and returned to Europe to report the sad fate of their companions. Three other Capuchins, deaf to the stern hint which the church of Rome had thus received from Abyssinia, volunteered their

services for the conversion, as it was termed, of that obstinate country. They accordingly set out on their journey; and, after encountering very considerable difficulties and hardships, at last succeeded in reaching Suakem. The Bashaw of this place had been previously written to by the King of Abyssinia, who, after announcing the expected arrival of these three priests, concluded by earnestly requesting him to "treat them according to their merits." As soon, therefore, as they landed, their heads were neatly cut off, and the skins of their skulls and faces were stripped, stuffed, and carefully packed off to the King of Abyssinia, at Gondar, "to satisfy him that these people had met with the attention which they deserved."

There was no mistaking the meaning of this unjust, sanguinary act; and when intelligence of it reached the Vatican, all hopes of converting Abyssinia vanished—the project was abandoned, and the Abyssinians were authoritatively classed among those "miserable heretics," those "lame children of the devil," who madly fancy they can walk through the wilderness of this world, and across the valley of the shadow of death, without the assistance of the Pope of Rome.

In the year 1698, the reigning King of Abyssinia, being exceedingly indisposed, sent to Cairo for a physician. Charles Poncet, a Frenchman at Cairo, who had been bred up as a chemist and apothecary, set out accordingly for Abyssinia, privately supported by Louis XIV., and taking with him, disguised as a servant, Father Bredent, a French Jesuit. They travelled up the Nile, remained some time at Sennaar, and at last reached Abyssinia, where Bredent, worn out by the climate, and the fatigue of his journey, died. In the year 1700, Poncet left Gondar, having repaired the constitution of the King of Abyssinia at

the expense of his own, which was completely exhausted by the hardships to which it had been subjected. He proceeded to Masuah, embarked on the Red Sea, and reached Cairo, whence, having published an account of his travels, he proceeded to Paris.

Four years afterwards, the King of Abyssinia, having favourably received several French letters which had been addressed to him, M. du Roule, vice-consul at Damietta, was selected by Louis XIV. to proceed, as his ambassador, to Abyssinia, and in July, 1704, he left Cairo for that purpose; but a quarrel had now broken out among two parties of Capuchins and Franciscans, between whom a most violent jealousy existed respecting the conversion of Abyssinia. It has been supposed that this jealousy was the secret cause of M. du Roule's death. As this traveller was quitting Sennaar, on his journey towards Abyssinia, he was surrounded in the large square which is before the king's house. Four blacks murdered him with their sabres; Gentil, his French servant, fell next, and his three other companions were then inhumanly butchered.

When the King of Abyssinia heard of Du Roule's murder, he was much disappointed and chagrined, for he had really been desirous of receiving this French ambassador, as well as the valuable presents which he expected he would bring with him. Unable to detect the sinister conspiracy which had caused his death, he conceived that it had been effected by desire of the Pasha of Cairo; and he accordingly addressed to him and to his Divan the following very curious communication:—

Translation of an Arabic Letter from the King of Abyssinia to the Pasha and Divan of Cairo.

“ To the Pasha, and Lords of the Militia of Cairo,

“ On the part of the King of Abyssinia, the King Tecla Haimanout, son of the King of the Church of Abyssinia.

“ On the part of the august king, the powerful arbiter of nations, shadow of God upon earth, the guide of kings who profess the religion of the Messiah, the most powerful of all Christian kings, maintainer of order between Mahometans and Christians, protector of the confines of Alexandria, observer of the commandments of the Gospel, heir from father to son of a most powerful kingdom, descended of the family of David and Solomon—may the blessing of Israel be upon our prophet, and upon them; may his happiness be durable, and his greatness lasting; and may his powerful army be always feared! To the most powerful lord, elevated by his dignity, venerable by his merits, distinguished by his strength and riches among all Mahometans, the refuge of all those that reverence him, who by his prudence governs and directs the armies of the noble empire, and commands his confines; victorious viceroy of Egypt, the four corners of which shall always be respected and defended—So be it! And to all the distinguished princes, judges, men of learning, and other officers, whose business it is to maintain order and good government, and to all commanders in general—may God preserve them all in their dignities, in the nobleness of their health! You are to know, that our ancestors never bore any envy to other kings, nor did they ever occasion them any trouble, or show them any mark of hatred. On the contrary, they have, upon all occasions, given them proofs of their friendship, assisting them generously, relieving them in their necessities, as well in what concerns the caravan and pilgrims of Mecca in Arabia Felix, as in the Indies, in Persia,

and other distant and out of the way places—also, by protecting distinguished persons in every urgent necessity.

“Nevertheless, when the king of France, our brother, who professes our religion and our law, having been induced thereto by some advances of friendship on our part such as are proper, sent an ambassador to us—I understand that you caused arrest him at Sennaar; and also another, by name Murat, the Syrian, whom likewise you did put in prison, though he was sent to that ambassador on our part; and, by thus doing, you have violated the law of nations; as ambassadors of kings ought to be at liberty to go wherever they will; and it is a general obligation to treat them with honour, and not to molest or detain them; nor should they be subject to pay customs, or any sort of presents. We could very soon repay you in kind, if we were inclined to revenge the insult you have offered to the man, Murat, sent on our part. *The Nile would be sufficient to punish you, since God hath put into our power his fountain, his outlet, and his increase, and that we can dispose of the same to do you harm:* for the present, we demand of and exhort you to desist from any future vexations towards our envoys, and not disturb us by detaining those who shall be sent towards you, but you shall let them pass, and continue their route without delay, coming and going wherever they will, freely for their own advantage, whether they are our subjects or Frenchmen; and whatever you shall do to or for them, we shall regard as done to or for ourselves!”

The address is—“To the Basha, Princes, and Lords governing the town of great Cairo, may God favour them with his goodness.”

The king, who had invited this M. du Roule into his country, was shortly afterwards assassinated while he was hunting; and the reign of his successor was a series of petty wars and commotions.

Several years afterwards, the Abyssinians resolved to invade Sennaar, but their army, which is said to have amounted to eighteen thousand men, either perished by the sword, or by thirst, or were made prisoners. All the sacred reliques, which the Abyssinian troops carry with them to ensure victory, were conveyed in triumph into Sennaar, and, with great difficulty the king escaped to his palace at Gondar.

About the year 1735, some misfortune having happened to the Christians at Smyrna, they flocked to Cairo; finding themselves very badly received there, several sailed up the Red Sea on their way to India, and, missing the monsoon, and being destitute of money and necessaries, a few of these ventured to land at Masuah. They were silversmiths; and as the King of Abyssinia happened, at the moment of their landing, to be much in want of European workmen to assist him in adorning his palace, these men were ordered to come to Gondar, where they remained for some time in the king's service, and afterwards gained a moderate livelihood by ornamenting saddles, &c.

Great jealousies now began to be entertained in Abyssinia, on account of the favour shown to some of the Galla chieftains, who were brought to court, and received with distinction. Violent dissensions took place; two kings successively met with a violent death—one being assassinated, the other poisoned, by Ras Michael, the governor of the province of Tigré, a most singular personage, with whom the reader will very shortly be acquainted.

King Tecla Haimanout succeeded to the throne, and the same year, 1769, James Bruce, the enterprising hero of these pages, landed at Masuah.

Since the death of M. du Roule, which took place seventy years before Bruce's arrival, Abyssinia had been so much forgotten in Europe, that it seemed almost blotted out of the book of existence. The immense distance, the climate in which it was situated, the deserts which nearly surrounded it, and the barbarous cruelty of the nations which bordered upon it, were of themselves quite sufficient to deter any ordinary traveller; and the great real dangers of the route had been highly exaggerated by the disappointed and expelled Romanists. The great link which had so long connected Abyssinia with Europe, namely, the attempt to convert it to the See of Rome, had been violently broken, and the vast gulf or chasm which now separated them no one seemed desirous to pass. Much as the country had suffered from the interference of the Catholic church, yet in Europe very little was known concerning it. Its conversion had for some time been a subject of severe discussion, but in the centre only of a very narrow, contracted circle. The Jesuits, who had visited Abyssinia, had undoubtedly been struck with the singular pictures they had witnessed; but the novelty of a strange country very soon fades before the eye, and one cares but little to describe to others what has ceased to interest himself.

Besides this, however zealous the Catholic missionaries may have been, they were not a description of men likely to have formed and carried away a correct notion of a country which had been the scene of such violent and, to them, unfortunate disturbances.

Without asserting that they had any wish to

distort the features of nature, it must not be forgotten that they never have very much temptation impartially to study them; for what is highly profitable to others affords them no mental enjoyment. In the game of common life they hold no stake whatever; they are comrades to no man but themselves; they receive no polish from female society; they see nothing of woman but the dark side of her character—they listen only to her sins. They have cut themselves off from the natural duties of mankind; and the human mind, chained to an artificial occupation, getting sullen and morose, soon snarls at the happiness which is beyond its reach. Besides this, in Abyssinia, the attention of the Catholics was constantly engrossed with the peculiar difficulties which opposed their object; even the great problem which so many ages had endeavoured to solve, seems, generally speaking, scarcely to have entered their thoughts; it was what they termed “the fountain of living waters,” and not the sources of the Nile, which had formed the constant subject of their attention.

Having now concluded a short sketch of that part of the history of Abyssinia which was unavoidably necessary to make the reader sufficiently acquainted with the country to take an interest in Bruce’s narrative, it remains only to be observed, that Bruce has given a most detailed account (which occupies about a thousand pages of his volumes) of the reigns of the several kings of Abyssinia, with minute descriptions of their persons, their petty feuds and dissensions, their wars with the Moors, the Galla, and the Falasha, (or Jews,) the burning of their churches, their savage treatment of the Shangalla tribes, &c.

The general reader will probably feel but little

curiosity to wade through records of so remote a country, particularly as, after all, they cannot be implicitly relied on; yet in the religious warfare which we have just concluded, what a correct miniature picture is afforded of the scenes which, on a much larger scale, have been produced in Europe and America by the grasping superstition of Rome!

If that "religion," as it is termed, was only a harmless error, an imbecile superstition, it would at least be deserving of the outward and inward respect with which every liberal man is disposed to treat whatever commands the respect of any great portion of his race; but we practically know that it not only wars openly, wherever it dares to do so, against the liberty of conscience, but absolutely tends to annihilate religion altogether. Even in France, our next door neighbour, Christianity has just sunk—drowned by the weight of Catholic superstition that oppressed it; and although the most uncivilised tribe joins in some sort of homely worship, yet that great country has now publicly announced the lamentable fact, that it disdains to have an established religion at all!

CHAPTER IX.

Bruce's Arrival and dangerous Detention at Masuah.

MASUAH is a small island on the Abyssinian shore, standing in front of the town of Arkeeko, and forming an excellent harbour: it is about three quarters of a mile in length, by about half that distance in breadth. One-third is occupied by houses, one-third by cisterns to receive rain-water, and the remainder is reserved as a place of burial.

Masuah was once a place of great commerce, possessing a share of the Indian trade; but its importance declined from the time when, with several other towns on the western coast of the Red Sea, it fell under the dominion of Selim, Emperor of Constantinople.

When the Turks first got possession of this island, a governor was sent to it from Constantinople; but its commerce being ruined, it was soon found not to be worth the expense attending the establishment of a pashalic. The pasha was accordingly withdrawn, and the Turks, having been assisted in their conquest of the place by a chieftain of the mountains of Habab, he was created Naybe, or Governor of Masuah, holding his title by a firman from the Ottoman Porte, to which he agreed to pay an annual tribute. The Janissaries who had formed the Turkish garrison were left in the island, and, intermarrying with its inhabitants, they soon introduced into the country the lawless, predatory, despotic notions of their race.

The Naybe, who thus became in fact the sovereign of the island, observing the great distance which separated him from the Turks in Arabia, whose garrisons were daily decaying, finding also that he was completely dependent upon Abyssinia for provisions, and even for water, soon perceived that he had better make advances to a country from which he could obtain both sustenance and protection. It was accordingly agreed between the King of Abyssinia and the Naybe, that the former should receive one-half of the customs of the port of Masuah, for which the latter should be permitted to enjoy his government unmolested, and purchase from Abyssinia whatever provisions, &c., he might require. The friendship of Abyssinia being thus secured, and the power of the Turks declining daily in Arabia, the Naybe began gradually to withdraw himself from paying tribute to the Pasha of Jidda, to which government he had been annexed by the Porte. He, in short, annually received his firman as a mere form, offering in return trifling presents, but no tribute at all.

It has already been stated, that a short time before Bruce arrived at Masuah, Abyssinia, under the influence of its minister, Ras Michael, was plunged in war, and the great province of Tigré (bordering on the little dominion of Masuah) being thus drained of its troops, the Naybe fraudulently availed himself of that opportunity to decline paying any longer his share of the customs to the crown of Abyssinia. This daring step he was induced to take from the peculiar situation in which Abyssinia seemed to be placed. Michael, the Ras or Governor of Tigré, having lately caused King Joas to be assassinated, sent to the mountain of Wechne, upon which the royal princes were confined, for Hatze Hannes, an

inbecile, priest-ridden old man. On its being observed to him that Hannes had only one hand, and that, by a most ancient custom, he was on this account ineligible for the throne, Michael angrily exclaimed, "What have kings to do with hands?" and no one daring to answer him, Hannes was declared King of Abyssinia. Hatze Hannes, whom Ras Michael had thus placed upon the throne, was more than seventy years of age, and Michael himself was not only nearly eighty, but lame, and scarcely able to stand. The Naybe of Masuah, who was in the vigour of life, fancied, therefore, that he might safely despise a government which appeared to him to be in its dotage; but in this he was greatly mistaken. No sooner had he declared his intention of retaining the whole of the customs of Masuah, than the old Ras informed him "that in the next campaign he would lay waste Arkeeko and Masuah, until they should be as desert as the wilds of Samhar!" and as the Ras, during the whole of his eventful life, had always very faithfully performed all promises of this nature, many of the foreign merchants at Masuah fled from the approaching storm to Arabia. Still, however, the Naybe showed no signs of fear, nor would he give the slightest proportion of his revenues either to the King of Abyssinia or to the Pasha of Jidda.

Masuah was in this disturbed state, when information was received there from Jidda, that a prince, a very near relation of the King of England, a person who was no trader, but, strange to say, was travelling only to visit countries and people, was about to arrive at Masuah, in his way to Abyssinia. When this intelligence arrived, the Naybe and his councillors assembled to determine what was to be done with the English prince. Several proposed that he should

at once be put to death, and his property divided among themselves. This expeditious and customary method of receiving a stranger at Masuah was opposed by others, who more prudently recommended that they should first see what letters the stranger might bring with him, lest by murdering him they should add fuel to the fire with which Ras Michael and the Pasha of Jidda had already threatened to consume them. But Achmet, the Naybe's nephew, nobly maintained, that whether the stranger had letters or not, his rank ought to protect him—that to murder him would be to act like banditti—that a sufficient quantity of the blood of strangers had been already shed—and that, in his opinion, it had brought the curse of poverty upon the place. He observed also that he had heard of a salute which had been fired at Jidda in compliment to this stranger, and he remarked that half that number of ships and guns would lay Masuah and Arkeeko as desolate as Ras Michael had already threatened to leave them. Achmet therefore voted that the Englishman should be received and treated with marks of consideration, until, on inspecting his letters and conversing with him, they might be able to judge what sort of a person he was, and on what errand he came;—that if it turned out he was one of those disturbers of the country, a proselytising priest, then indeed they might send him to "*Gehennim*" (hell). There was both eloquence and prudence in Achmet's speech, besides which he was the heir-apparent of his uncle the Naybe. His opinion and his arguments were therefore approved of by all, and it was agreed that the fate of the English prince should be left to his disposal.

Bruce was always of opinion that the salute with which he had been honoured in the port of Jidda had

been the means of saving his life on his landing in Abyssinia; and if so, it may fairly be said that his own good conduct, which had obtained for him this mark of the approbation of his countrymen, was, under Providence, the cause of his escaping alive from Masuah, that slaughter-house of strangers.

On the 19th of September, 1769, Bruce and his party, little aware of the debate which had been held respecting them, arrived at Masuah, tired of the sea, and eagerly desirous to land. The Pasha of Jidda, determined to obtain the tribute which was due to him from the Naybe of Masuah, had prevailed upon the Sherriffe of Mecca to send over with Bruce Mahomet Gibberti, who was ordered peremptorily to demand payment from the Naybe, and also privately to request Ras Michael to lend his aid in compelling the Naybe to perform his agreement.

Mahomet Gibberti, a sincere friend to Bruce's interests, landed, therefore, immediately, and being an Abyssinian, and having even connexions at Masuah, he managed to despatch that same night to Adowa, the capital of Tigré, letters by which Ras Michael and the Court of Abyssinia were informed that Bruce had arrived at Masuah, bearing letters from the Sherriffe of Mecca, from the Greek Patriarch of Cairo, &c. &c.; but that, being afraid of the Naybe, he begged some one might be immediately sent to protect him. These letters were addressed to the care of Janni, a Greek, who was then residing at Adowa, in Tigré. He was a man of excellent character, had served two kings of Abyssinia, and had been lately appointed by Ras Michael to the custom-house of Adowa, to superintend the affairs of the revenue, during the time that the Ras was occupied at Gondar.

As soon as these despatches had left Masuah, Mahomet Gibberti waited upon Achmet and the

Naybe, and adroitly confirmed, in their minds, the impression they had already received of Bruce's importance. He told them of the firman which he carried with him from the Grand Seignior, of his acquaintance with the Sherriffe of Mecca, of the honours he had received from his countrymen, and of the surprising power and wealth of his nation.

Gibberti having thus made every exertion possible to insure the safety of his English friends, Bruce landed at Masuah on the 20th of September, 1769. The Naybe himself was at Arkeeko; but Achmet, his nephew, came down to receive the duties on Bruce's merchandise.

Two elbow-chairs were placed in the middle of the market-place. On one of them Achmet was seated, surrounded by several of the officers who were to open Bruce's bales and packages which were before him; the other chair, on his left hand, remained unoccupied. Achmet was dressed in a long white muslin Banian habit, which reached to his ankles; and when Bruce arrived within arm's length of him, he arose. They touched each other's hands, carried their fingers to their lips, and then crossed their hands upon their breasts. "Salum Alicum!—peace be between us!" (the salutation of the inferior), said Bruce firmly. "Alicum Salum;—there *is* peace between us!" replied Achmet, who then pointed to the chair, which Bruce at first declined; but Achmet insisting that he should occupy it, they both, with great dignity, sat down. Achmet then made a sign for coffee, which Bruce knew to be the token of the country that the life of the guest was not in danger.

"We have expected you here some time," said Achmet, "but thought you had changed your mind, and had gone to India. Are you not afraid, so thinly attended, to venture upon these long and dangerous

voyages?" "Since sailing from Jidda," replied Bruce, "I have been in Arabia Felix, in the Gulf of Mocha, and crossed last from Loheia. The countries in which I have been are either subject to the Emperor of Constantinople, whose firman I have now the honour to present to you, or to the Regency of Cairo and port of Janissaries (he presented also their letters), or to the Sherriffe of Mecca. To you, Sir, I present the Sherriffe's letters, and, besides, one from him to yourself; depending on your character, he assured me this alone would be sufficient to preserve me from ill usage, so long as I did no wrong."

Achmet returned the letters to Bruce, saying, "You will give these to the Naybe to-morrow. I will keep my own letter, and will read it at home." He accordingly put it in his bosom, and the coffee being removed, Bruce rose to take leave; but he was scarcely on his feet before he was wetted to the skin with deluges of rose-water, showered upon him on every side from silver bottles.

One of the best houses in the town had been provided for him; and, when he entered it, a large dinner followed him from Achmet, with a profusion of lemons, and good fresh water, one of the scarcest commodities at Masuah. Very shortly afterwards, the baggage arrived unopened, which gave him very great pleasure, as he had been greatly afraid that his clock, telescope, quadrant and other instruments, would have suffered from the violent curiosity of the Naybe's officers.

Late at night, Bruce received a private visit from Achmet, who was then in his undress. His body was naked, excepting a barracan, which was thrown loosely about him; he wore a pair of loose cotton drawers; a white cap was on his head. Bruce rose to meet him, and thanked him for his civility in sending his baggage.

After expressing great surprise that Bruce, a Christian, had managed to get letters from Mahometans; after inquiring whether he was really a prince, whether he was banished from his own country, and for what possible object he could voluntarily expose himself to so many difficulties and dangers, in order merely to visit that country; he earnestly endeavoured, as the sole object of his visit, to persuade Bruce to remain at Masuah, and not to proceed into Abyssinia.

Instead of making a long reply to questions, and to a request to which Bruce was sensible he could give no satisfactory answer, he very shortly put an end to Achmet's speech, by presenting him with a very handsome pair of pistols. "Let the pistols remain with you," said Achmet, "and show them to nobody till I send you a man, to whom you may say anything; for there are in this place a number of devils, not men; but Ullah Kerim! God is Great! The person that brings you dry dates in an Indian handkerchief, and an earthen bottle to drink your water out of, give him the pistols. In the meantime, sleep sound, and fear no evil; but never be persuaded to trust yourself to the cafrs of Habbesh at Masuah." With this caution, Achmet departed, and a female slave very shortly arriving with dates, &c., for Bruce, he committed the brace of pistols to her charge.

On the morning of the 21st, the Naybe came from Arkeeko. He was attended by three or four servants, and about forty naked savages on foot, armed with short lances and crooked knives. He was preceded by a drum, made out of one of those earthen jars in which butter is sent over to Arabia; it was covered with skin, and looked more like a jar of pickles or of butter, than an instrument of music.

The whole of the procession was in the same style. The Naybe was dressed in an old shabby Turkish habit, much too short for him, and on his head he wore a Turkish cowke, or cap.

In the afternoon, Bruce went to pay his respects to him, and found him sitting in a large elbow-chair, from which two files of naked savages formed an avenue that reached to the door. The Naybe was a tall, thin, black man, with a large mouth and nose; he had no beard, save a scanty tuft of grey hairs on the point of his chin; his eyes were large and heavy; a malicious contemptuous smile sat on his countenance. His character perfectly corresponded with his appearance; for he was a man of no abilities, cruel to excess, brutal, avaricious, and, moreover, a great drunkard.

It was to this creature that Bruce presented a firman, which the greatest pasha in the Turkish empire would have kissed and carried to his forehead. The Naybe took it, as well as the various letters which accompanied it, in both his hands, and laying them unopened by his side—"You should have brought a moullah (an interpreter) with you," he said to Bruce. "Do you think I shall read all these letters?—why, it would take me a month!" "Just as you please!" replied Bruce.

A dead silence followed this laconic remark: at last Bruce offered his presents, and then took his leave, little pleased with his reception, and heartily rejoicing that the despatches, which had been sent to Janni, were now far beyond the power of the Naybe.

The inhabitants of Masuah, which, like the whole of the low coast of the Red Sea, is at all times a most unhealthy spot, were sinking under the small-pox in such numbers, that the living were scarcely able to bury the dead; and the whole island, night

and day, resounded with shrieks and lamentations. Bruce, on this account, had suppressed his character of physician, fearing lest he should be detained by the multitude of the sick.

On the 15th of October, the Naybe despatched the vessel which had brought Bruce to Masuah; and this evidence or spy upon his own conduct was no sooner out of the way, than that very night he sent a message to Bruce, desiring that he would prepare for him a handsome present: he even gave a list of the articles he required, which he desired might be made up in three parcels, to be delivered to him on three separate days. The first parcel was to be given to him as Naybe of Arkeeko, the second as the representative of the Grand Seignior, and the third for having passed the baggage, particularly the quadrant, gratis and unopened.

It is always worse than useless to yield to the impositions of a savage; for, in his presence, he who bends must also break. Under these circumstances, firmness can hardly be called courage; for it is rather a desperate means of preserving life and property. Bruce replied, that having the firman of the Grand Seignior, and letters from the Sherriffe of Mecca, it was mere generosity which had induced him to give any present at all; that he was not a trafficker who bought and sold; that he had no merchandise on board; and, therefore, that he had no customs to pay. Upon this, the Naybe sent for Bruce to his house, where he found him in a most violent passion: many words passed on both sides; at last, the Naybe peremptorily declared, that unless Bruce paid him three hundred ounces of gold, "he would confine him in a dungeon; without light, air, or meat, until his bones came through his skin."

"Since you have broken your faith," replied Bruce

undauntedly, "with the Grand Seignior, the government of Cairo, the Pasha of Jidda, and the Sherriffe of Mecca, you will, no doubt, do as you please with me; but you may expect to see the English man-of-war, the Lion, before Arkeeko some morning before daybreak!"

"I should be glad," exclaimed the Naybe, holding out his hand, "to see that man at Arkeeko or Masuah that would carry as much writing from you to Jidda as would lie upon my thumb-nail. I would strip his shirt off first, then his skin, and then hang him before your door, to teach you more wisdom."

"But my wisdom," replied Bruce, "has already taught me to prevent all this. My letter is already gone to Jidda! and if, in twenty days from this, another letter from me does not follow it, you will see what will arrive. In the meantime, I here announce it to you, that I have letters from the Sherriffe of Mecca to Ras Michael, governor of Tigré, and to the King of Abyssinia; let me, therefore, continue my journey!"

"What, Michael too!" muttered the Naybe, writhing under the conviction that Bruce had overreached him; "then go your journey," he maliciously added, "and think of the ill that is before you!"

On the 29th of October, the Naybe again came from Arkeeko to Masuah, and sent for Bruce, who found him in a large room, like a barn, with about sixty of his janissaries and officers of state, all naked. The first question which the Naybe asked Bruce was, "what the comet meant, and why it had appeared?" He added, "the first time it was visible it brought the small-pox, which killed about one thousand people in Masuah and Arkeeko. It is known you conversed with it every night at Loheia. It has now followed you here, to finish the few that remain; and then

they say you are to carry it with you into Abyssinia. What have you to do with the comet?" To this strange, barbarous speech Bruce was about to reply, when some one present said he had been informed that Bruce was going to Ras Michael, to teach the Abyssinians to make cannon and gunpowder, in order to attack Masuah. Five or six others spoke loudly in the same strain; and, surrounded by such a crowd of naked savages—savages in every sense of the word—Bruce would most probably at this moment have ended his travels and his life, had it not been for the precautions he had taken in bringing proper letters to Masuah, and in sending others from it, which placed the Naybe between two batteries, the fire of which he trembled to incur. "Dog of a Christian!" exclaimed one of the company, putting his hand to his knife, "if the Naybe wished to murder you, could he not do it here this minute?" "No!" exclaimed another voice from the crowd, "he could not! I would not suffer it. Achmet is the stranger's friend, and has to-day recommended me to see that no injury be done him. Achmet is ill, or he would have been here himself!"

Bruce now turned upon his heel, and without form or ceremony, walked out of the barn. He had scarcely dined, when a servant came with a letter from Achmet (who was at Arkeeko), telling him how ill he had been, and how much surprise he had felt at his refusal to see him—he concluded, by desiring that the bearer should take charge of Bruce's gate, until he could come himself to Masuah. Bruce now discovered the falsehood and treachery of the Naybe, and resolved to follow Achmet's instructions. At midnight, his gate was attacked, but declaring he would fire, the assassins retired.

On the 4th of November, Bruce went to Arkeeko,

and found Achmet in his own house, ill of an intermitting fever, which had the very worst symptoms; however, he prescribed for, and remained with his patient, until he was free from the disorder. On the 6th, in the morning, while at breakfast, he was rejoiced to hear that three servants had arrived from Tigré. One was from Janni, the Greek officer of the customs at Adowa; the other two were evidently servants of Ras Michael, or rather of the king, both wearing the red short cloak lined and turned up with mazarine blue, which is the badge of the royal retinue.

Ras Michael's letters to the Naybe were very short. He said the king's health was bad, that he wondered why a physician sent to him from Arabia was not at once allowed to proceed to Gondar, and that he had long heard of his having arrived at Masuah. He concluded by ordering the Naybe to furnish the stranger with necessaries, and then to forward him without loss of time. In the evening, Bruce returned to the island of Masuah, to the great joy of his servants, who were afraid of some stratagem of the Naybe.

Without interruption, he got everything in readiness, and having concluded his observations upon this inhospitable island, infamous for the quantity of Christian blood which had been shed there on various pretences, he left Masuah on the 10th of November, after a detention of nearly two months. On arriving at Arkeeko, he found Achmet considerably better; but as he still appeared to be wonderfully afraid of dying, Bruce remained with him until he was convalescent, for which he testified very great gratitude.

The Naybe again endeavoured, by intimidation, to prevail upon Bruce to pay him a thousand patakas; and his friends, seeing his obstinacy, and aware of the cruelty of his disposition, strongly recommended Bruce

to give up all thoughts of proceeding to Abyssinia, as in passing through Samhar, and the many barbarous people whom the Naybe commanded there, he would most surely be cut off. However, Bruce shortly replied, that he was resolutely determined to go forward, and accordingly, early in the morning of the 15th, he ordered his tents to be struck, and his baggage to be prepared, so as to show that he was resolved to stay no longer. At eight o'clock he went to the Naybe, who was almost alone, and who began with considerable fluency of speech a long enumeration of the difficulties of the journey, the rivers, precipices, mountains, woods, wild beasts, savage, lawless people, &c., which were to be passed, and thus once more endeavoured, but in vain, to persuade Bruce to remain at Masuah. In the middle of their conversation, a servant entered the room covered with dust, and apparently fatigued with a rapid journey from some distant place. The Naybe, with much pretended uneasiness and surprise, read the letters which this man delivered to him, and then gravely told Bruce, that the three tribes who occupied Samhar, the common passage from Masuah to Tigré, had revolted, had driven away his servants, and had declared themselves independent. With apparent devotion, he then hypocritically lifted up his eyes, and said he thanked God that Bruce was not on his journey, as his death would have been sure to be unjustly imputed to him! Bruce only laughed at this barefaced imposition, on which the Naybe told him he might proceed if he thought proper, but that he only wished to warn him of his danger. "We have plenty of fire-arms," replied Bruce, "and your servants have often seen at Masuah that we are not ignorant of the use of them. It is true we may lose our lives—that is in the hands of the Almighty, but we shall not

fail to leave enough on the spot, to give sufficient indication to the king and Ras Michael who were our assassins!" "What I mentioned about the Shiho," replied the Naybe, whose treacherous countenance now assumed a look of complacency, "was only to try you; all is peace! I only wanted to keep you here, if possible, to cure my nephew Achmet; but since you are resolved to go, be not afraid, the roads are safe enough, I will give you a person to conduct you safely."

After bidding adieu to this wretch, Bruce had a short interview with Achmet, who privately told him it was yet far from the Naybe's intentions he should ever reach Gondar, but that he would take Bruce's final deliverance upon himself, and he concluded by advising him to set out immediately.

The short description which we have just concluded of the Naybe of Masuah may appear exaggerated to those who have never had the misfortune to treat with human beings of this uncivilised description. But, in fact, nothing can be worse than the mongrel race of the people of Masuah, who, as we have already stated, are a mixed breed between the savages of the western coast of the Red Sea, and those super-savages, the Turkish Janissaries.

Salt visited this place in 1810, forty-one years after Bruce had left it. Besides handsome presents which he made to the governor, he was unable to resist the impositions of the Naybe, his brothers, and his sons; "and among this tribe of locusts," Salt says, "I was compelled to distribute nearly five hundred dollars before I could get clear of the place. With a pleasure somewhat similar to that expressed by Gil Blas, when he escaped from the robbers' cave, we quitted Arkeeko. Among all the descriptions of men I have ever met with, the character of the half-civilised

savages found at Arkeeko is the most detestable, as they have ingeniously contrived to lose all the virtues of the rude tribes to which they belonged, without having acquired anything except the vices of their more civilised neighbours. The only description I recollect that would particularly suit them, may be found in Mr. Bruce's very energetic account of the inhabitants of Sennaar."

It is very singular that Salt, who invariably thus corroborates Bruce in all the principal features of his history, should have been, as we shall shortly see, so completely carried away by the party spirit which existed against him. "Adversity," it has been justly observed, "makes men friends;" but though Bruce and Salt suffered at Masuah and Arkeeko under the same rod, yet the latter takes even there every opportunity of supporting Lord Valentia in his petty attempt to convict Bruce of "falsehood" and "exaggeration." But the great tide of public opinion was still strong against Bruce, and upon its faithless waters Lord Valentia and his secretary floated in triumph.

CHAPTER X.

Journey from Arkeeko, over the Mountain of Tarenta to Gondar,
the Capital of Abyssinia.

ON the 15th of November, Bruce left Arkeeko, and, after crossing a small plain, pitched his tent near a shallow pit of rain water. Before him were the mountains of Abyssinia, in three distinct ridges. The first broken into gullies, and thinly covered with shrubs; the second higher, steeper, more rugged and bare; the third a row of sharp-edged mountains, which would be considered high in any part of Europe. Far above them all, towered that stupendous mass, the mountain of Tarenta, the point of which is sometimes buried in the clouds, while sometimes, completely enveloped in mist and darkness, it becomes the seat of lightning, thunder, and storm. Tarenta is the highest pinnacle of that long steep ridge of mountains which, running parallel to the Red Sea, forms the boundary of the seasons. On its east side, or towards the Red Sea, the rainy season is from October to April, and on the western or Abyssinian side, cloudy, rainy, and cold weather reigns from May till October.

While Bruce was in his tent, he was visited by his grateful friend and faithful patient, Achmet, who told him not to go to Dobarwa, for, although it was a good road, the safest was always the best. "You will be apt to curse me," he added, "when you are toiling and sweating in ascending Tarenta, the highest mountain

in Abyssinia; but you may then consider if the fatigue of your body is not overpaid by the absolute safety you will find yourselves in. Dobarwa belongs to the Naybe, and I cannot answer for the orders he may have given to his own servants; but Dixan is mine, although the people are much worse than those of Dobarwa. I have written to my officers there; and as you are strong and robust, the best I can do for you is, to send you by a rugged road, and a safe one." Achmet, Bruce, and his party, then rose, with solemnity, and repeating the fedtah, or prayer of peace, they parted never to meet again. "Thus finished," says Bruce, in the narrative of his travels, "a series of trouble and vexation, not to say danger, superior to anything I ever before had experienced, and of which the bare recital (though perhaps too minute a one) will give but an imperfect idea. These wretches possess talents for tormenting and alarming far beyond the power of belief, and, by laying a true sketch of them before a traveller, an author does him the most real service."—"In this country," Bruce most justly adds, "the more truly we draw the portrait of man, the more we seem to fall into caricature."

Although the dangers and difficulties which had attended Bruce's residence at Masuah and Arkeeko, and which still threatened, though in different shapes, to oppose his journey into Abyssinia, would have been sufficient to have deterred any ordinary traveller, yet, on the 16th, he cheerfully left Laherhey, and for two days travelled along a dry, gravelly plain, thickly covered with acacia trees, which were in blossom, bearing a round yellow flower. Entering a narrow opening in the mountains, which seemed to have been formed by the violent torrents of the rainy season, they travelled up a sandy bed, the verdant

banks of which, shaded from the sun by the impending mountains, were covered with rack trees, capers, and tamarinds.

Following the course of this stream, they proceeded among mountains of no great height, but bare, stony, and full of terrible precipices, until, oppressed and overpowered by the sun, they halted under the shade of the trees before mentioned. Great numbers of Shiho, with their wives and families, were descending from the tops of the high mountains of Habbesh (Abyssinia), and passed, driving their flocks to the pasture, which in the months of October and November grows on the plains near the sea.

The Shiho were once very numerous, but, like all the nations which communicate with Masuah, they have been much diminished by the small-pox. They have neither tents nor cottages, but live in caves in the mountains, or under small huts, built of reeds or thick grass. The men are generally naked above the waist; the women are covered with a sort of gown, loose in the sleeves and body, and held together by a leather girdle. The children of both sexes are completely naked. The party of these people which passed Bruce consisted of about fifty men and about thirty women; each of the former held a lance in his hand, a knife peeping from his girdle.

Although they had the superiority of ground, they appeared uneasy at the sight of strangers. Bruce saluted the chief, asking him if he would sell one out of their great flock of goats, but the man seemed to think it prudent to decline entering into conversation, and the whole tribe passed in silence onwards. In the evening, Bruce resumed his journey, and at night pitched his tent at Hamhammou, on the side of a small green hill, some hundred feet from the bed of the torrent. The weather had been perfectly

good since he left Masuah: this afternoon, however, the mountains were quite hid, and heavy clouds were sweeping along the sides of the lower range of hills; the lightning was very frequent, broad, and deeply tinged with blue, and long, rumbling peals of thunder were heard at a great distance. As Bruce's description of this storm is one of the parts of his narrative which have been marked as exaggerated, we give it in his own words:—"The river," he says, "scarcely ran at our passing it, when all on a sudden we heard a noise on the mountains above louder than the loudest thunder. Our guides, upon this, flew to the baggage, and removed it to the top of the green hill; which was no sooner done, than we saw the river coming down in a stream about the height of a man, and the breadth of the whole bed it used to occupy. The water was thickly tinged with red earth, and ran in the form of a deep river, and swelled a little above its banks, but did not reach our station on the hill."

Salt says—"Bruce passed a night on the same spot (Hamhammou), and it was his fortune, as well as ours, to encounter here a terrible storm, which, as usual, he describes with some exaggeration."

In Sicily and in Greece we have known many people to have been carried away by the violent "fumaras," which are even there generated by the sudden rains; and Bruce's description of a storm within the tropics does not appear to be at all exaggerated. But it seems that Mr. Salt's storm was not equal to the one described by poor Bruce; and Salt, therefore, makes up the difference by raising a little tempest of his own against a fellow traveller; and yet, in a very few pages, he says, "We heard that the dead bodies of three men had been found washed down by the torrent on this side of Tarenta."—"Dead

men," it has been said, "tell no tales!" yet surely these corpses do corroborate very strongly Bruce's account of the storm he witnessed; but Lord Valentia and his secretary really seem to have fancied that they were to find every thing in Abyssinia, elements and all, precisely as Bruce left them forty years before.

Leaving Hamhammou, Bruce first saw "the dung of elephants, which was full of thick pieces of undigested branches." He also observed the tracks through which these enormous animals had passed; trees were torn up by the roots, some were even broken in the middle, and branches, half-eaten, were lying on the ground.

Hamhammou is a desert mountain of black stones, apparently almost calcined with the heat of the sun: it forms the boundary of a district that belongs to the Hazorta. This tribe, who, from inhabiting a higher country, have a much lighter complexion than their neighbours, the Shihos, are exceedingly active;—they inhabit caves, or cabanes, like cages, which, covered with hides, are just large enough to hold two persons. They live in constant defiance of the Naybe of Masuah, against whom their attacks have generally proved successful. As their nights are here cold, even in summer, the Hazorta, as well as their children, are clothed.

Bruce now proceeded through a plain which, he says, "was set so thick with acacia trees, that our hands and faces were all torn and bloody with the strokes of their thorny branches." They suddenly came to the mouth of a narrow valley, through which a stream of beautiful water ran very swiftly over a bed of pebbles. It was the first clear water which Bruce had seen since he left Syria, and it naturally gave him that indescribable pleasure which

sweet water always affords to a tired, thirsting traveller. The shade of the tamarind-tree and the coolness of the air invited them to rest on this delightful spot. "The caper-tree," says Bruce, "here grows as high as the tallest English elm; its flower is white, and its fruit, though not ripe, was fully as large as an apricot. I went at some distance to a small pool of water to bathe, and took my firelock with me, but none of the savages stirred from their huts, nor seemed to regard me more than if I had lived among them all their lives, though surely I was the most extraordinary sight they had ever seen; whence I conclude that they are a people of small talents or genius, having no curiosity."

Proceeding along the side of the river, among large timber trees, Bruce pitched his tent by the side of another stream, as clear, as shallow, and as beautiful as the first; yet, in every direction, he was surrounded by bleak, black, desolate mountains, covered with loose stones, and, besides these, there was nothing to be seen but the heavens. Their road for some time wound between mountains, the banks of the torrent being still covered with rack and sycamore trees, which, being under a burning sun, and well watered, were naturally of an enormous size. In the evening they reached Tubbo, and as Salt says, "Bruce has well described this place," we shall give the picture in his own words:—

"At half-past eight o'clock," says Bruce, "we encamped at a place called Tubbo, where the mountains are very steep, and broken very abruptly into cliffs and precipices. Tubbo was by much the most agreeable station we had seen; the trees were thick, full of leaves, and gave us abundance of very dark shade. There was a number of many different kinds, so closely planted that they seemed to be intended for

natural arbours. Every tree was full of birds, variegated with an infinity of colours, but destitute of song; others, of a more homely and more European appearance, diverted us with a variety of wild notes, in a style of music still distinct and peculiar to Africa; as different in the composition from our linnet and goldfinch, as our English language is to that of Abyssinia. Yet, from very attentive and frequent observation, I found that the skylark at Masuah sang the same notes as in England. It was observable, that the greatest part of the beautiful painted birds were of the jay, or magpie kind. Nature seemed, by the fineness of their dress, to have marked them for children of noise and impertinence, but never to have intended them for pleasure or meditation."

Leaving Tubbo, they proceeded on their journey, and at night encamped by the side of a rivulet, in a narrow valley full of trees and brushwood: a number of antelopes were running about in all directions; but as the Hazorta tribes were supposed to be in the neighbourhood, Bruce was advised not to fire until he reached the mountain of Tarenta, at the foot of which he arrived on the following morning. In the cool of the evening, they began to ascend the mountain by a path of great steepness, and full of holes and gullies made by the torrents. With extreme difficulty, Bruce and his party crawled along, each man carrying his knapsack and arms—but it seemed quite impossible to carry the baggage and the instruments.

The quadrant had hitherto been carried by eight men, four of whom relieved the others, but they gave up the undertaking after proceeding a few hundred yards. Various expedients, such as trailing it along the ground, &c., were then proposed. "At last," says

Bruce, "as I was incomparably the strongest of the company, as well as the most interested, I and the Moor Yasiné (the man who had behaved so gallantly when Bruce's vessel was aground in the Red Sea) carried the head of it for about four hundred yards, over the more difficult and steepest part of the mountain, which before had been considered as impracticable by all. We carried it steadily up the steep, eased the case gently over the big stones on which, from time to time, we rested it, and to the wonder of them all, placed the head of the three-foot quadrant, with its double case, in safety, far above the stony parts of the mountain. At Yasiné's request, we then undertook the next difficult task, which was to carry the iron foot of the quadrant." Bruce and Yasiné suffered much in this exertion; "their hands and feet were cut and mangled with sliding down and clambering over the sharp points of the rocks, and their clothes were torn to pieces." However, at last, after infinite toil, and with as much pleasure, they succeeded in placing all their instruments and baggage about half-way up this terrible mountain of Tarenta.

There were five asses, which were quite as difficult to get up the mountain as the baggage. The greater part of their burdens were carried by the party up to the instruments; and it was proposed, as a thing which any person might do, to make the unladen beasts follow the baggage; but they no sooner found themselves at liberty, and that a man was proposing to them to ascend a steep mountain, than they began to kick, bite each other, and then, with one consent, away they trotted, braying down the hill, stopping at last to eat some bushes.

The number of hyænas, which were lurking about, had probably been seen or smelt by these animals, as

they all assembled into a body; and in this defensive state they were found by their masters, who proceeded to drive them once again up the mountain. The hyænas, however, followed them step by step, until the men began to be quite as much afraid for themselves as for the asses. At last the wild beasts became so bold, that one of them seized a donkey, and pulled him down. A general engagement would probably have ensued, had not Yasiné's man fired his gun, the report of which made the enemy retire, leaving the asses and the ass-drivers to pursue their way, and it was nearly midnight before these jaded long and short-eared stragglers joined their masters.

Next morning early, Bruce having encouraged his people by good words, increase of wages, and promises of reward, they began to encounter the other half of the mountain. The baggage now moved on briskly. The upper part of the mountain was steeper, more craggy, rugged, and slippery than the lower, but not so much embarrassed by large stones and holes. "Our knees and hands," says Bruce, "were cut to pieces by frequent falls, and our faces torn by the multitude of thorny bushes. I twenty times now thought of what Achmet had told me at parting, that I should curse him for the bad road shown to me over Tarenta." However, with great difficulty they at last reached the summit, upon which they found a small village, chiefly inhabited by very poor people who tend the flocks belonging to the town of Dixan.

Salt sneers, as usual, at Bruce's description of the difficulties he encountered in ascending Tarenta. He says, "*We did not meet with a single hyæna, or troglodytical cave, and luckily 'had not our hands and knees cut by frequent falls, or our faces torn by thorny bushes,'* which last, indeed, appears scarcely possible in so open and frequented a path." Now,

Bruce never said that the hyænas of Tarenta would find Mr. Salt ; or that Mr. Salt would find the caves which Bruce says he went out of his path to discover : yet, if Mr. Salt had ever read the following extract of a journey made into Ethiopia (by Father Remedio of Bohemia, Martino of Bohemia, and Antonio of Aleppo, of the order of Reformed Minorites of St. Francis, missionaries for the propagation of the Christian faith,) he would, perhaps, have hesitated before he accused Bruce of exaggeration, more particularly about “the thorns and briars of Tarenta.”

“Our way” (from Masuah), says one of those holy fathers, “lay over high mountains, deep valleys, and through impenetrable woods, in passing which we encountered many dangers and grievous hardships. More than once we were obliged to climb the tops of the mountains on our hands and feet, which were sorely rent and torn with *brambles and thorny bushes*. No house nor inn being found here, every body is obliged to lie in the open air, exposed to the deprecation of robbers, and liable every moment to become the prey of wolves, lions, tigers, and beasts of a similar description, which are almost continually met with, of all which I shall cease to speak, from the horror and dread with which the very thought of them still afflicts me.”

It has already been stated, that Lord Valentia published “Voyages and Travels to Abyssinia,” &c. although he had only landed at the port of Masuah, which does not belong to Abyssinia ; his evidence, therefore, cannot carry with it much weight, yet with his own secretary he may certainly be allowed to dispute. “The night,” says his lordship, “was cooler, and I was not so restless ; in the morning I had no fever, and at dinner some appetite. I viewed from my window the island of Valentia, distant about five

leagues; Ras Gidden, and the chain of mountains that lines the coast of the Red Sea from this place to the plains of Egypt. Behind these the summit of Tarenta peeps out, and gives credit, by its height, to Mr. Bruce's account of the difficulty he had in ascending it. A restless night determined me to leave off wine, and try if that would cool me. In other respects I was better, and, thank God! my spirits never left me for a moment."

But Mr. Salt absolutely forgets himself, for in vol. iii. p. 12, speaking of "a semicircular ridge of mountains, over which there is but one pass by which it is possible to ascend," he says, "in steepness and ruggedness this hill may be compared to Tarenta, though its height is considerably inferior." And in Mr. Salt's "Travels to Abyssinia," page 201, he again says, "on the 10th, the party ascended Senafé, which is said to be full as high, *though not so difficult to pass, as Tarenta.*"

The trifling, cavilling remarks which have been made against Bruce's character by Lord Valentia and Mr. Salt, who admit that his history of Abyssinia and his general descriptions are correct, remind us of Shakspeare's description of the sun,

When envious clouds seem bent to dim his glory,
And check his bright course to the occident.

The plain on the summit of the mountain of Tarenta was in many places sown with wheat, which was just ready to be cut. The grain appeared to be clean, and of a good colour, but inferior in size to that of Egypt. It did not, however, grow thick, nor was its stalk above fourteen inches high. The water on Tarenta was very bad, being only what remained of the rain that had been collected in hollows of the rocks, and in pits artificially prepared for it. Being

very tired, Bruce and his party pitched their tents on the top of the mountain. The night felt dreadfully cold to them, accustomed as they had been to the heat of the low country of Masuah: the dew fell heavily, yet the sky was so clear, that the smallest stars were discernible.

The people who live on the mountain of Tarenta are of a dark, sallow complexion. Their heads are uncovered, a goat's skin hangs upon their shoulders, they wear a cotton cloth about their waist, and sandals on their feet. Their hair is cut short, and curled artificially, to look like the wool of a negro. The men usually carry two lances, a shield made of bull's hide, and a very long broad knife stuck in their girdles. All sorts of cattle are here in great plenty. The cows are generally white, with large dewlaps hanging down to their knees, hair like silk, and wide horns. The sheep are large and black—they have great heads, which they carry very erect, and small ears, and they are covered with hair instead of wool.

Early on the morning of the 22nd, Bruce and his party eagerly descended the mountain. The cedar trees, which had been so tall and beautiful on the top and on the east side of Tarenta, degenerated on the west into small shrubs and scraggy bushes. Lower down the people were busy with their harvest, and cows and bullocks were seen treading out the corn, the straw being burnt or left to rot upon the ground. In the evening they reached the town of Dixan. Salt says, "we passed over the highest part of the irregular hill on which Dixan is built, and which Bruce has very accurately described, when he compared it to a sugar-loaf."

Dixan, like most frontier towns, is the rendezvous of the bad people of the two contiguous countries. "The town," says Bruce, "consists of Moors and Chris-

tians, and is very well peopled, yet the only trade of either is a very extraordinary one, that of selling children. The Christians bring such as they have stolen in Abyssinia to Dixan, and the Moors, receiving them there, carry them to a sure market to Masuah, whence they are sent to Arabia or India."

Rather a curious instance of this barbarous system was exemplified in the history of two priests who were slaves in the Naybe's house, while Bruce was at Masuah.

These two priests formerly dwelt at Tigré as most intimate friends—the young one living with a woman by whom he had two sons. One day, the old priest came to the young one to say, that as he had no children of his own, he would provide for one of the boys, who was accordingly most gratefully committed to his care. The old wretch, however, took him to Dixan, and after selling him there as a slave, returned to his friend, with a splendid account of his son's reception, treatment, and brilliant future prospects. The other child who was about eight years old hearing of the wonderful good fortune of his elder brother, entreated to be permitted to pay him a visit. The old priest said that he did not altogether disapprove of his design, but he observed, that he felt a sort of scruple—a kind of repugnance—in short, that he was unwilling to be responsible for the safety of so very young a boy, unless his mother would accompany him—and as mothers yearn for their children in Abyssinia as elsewhere, the woman most readily consented to attend her boy, under the protection of the old priest, who kindly took them to Dixan and—sold them both!

Returning to his friend the young priest, he told him, that his wife expected he would come and fetch her on a particular day. Accordingly when the time

arrived, the two priests, "the old jack-daw and the young jack-daw" set out together, and on reaching Dixan, the young one found out that his aged friend had not only sold the woman and the two boys, but that he himself, their father, was also sold! The whole family were thus by treachery doomed to finish their days in misery and slavery. However, the slave-merchants persuaded the old priest to accompany the party to a place near Dixan, where he was assured that he should receive all that was due to him. On reaching this spot the whole pack flew upon him: the merchants bound him as their slave; the woman and the young priest humbly begged for permission to pluck out his beard, and, as that ceremony, besides its pain, was expected to have the effect of adding to his value by making the "old gentleman" look younger, permission was granted. On reaching Masuah, the woman and the boys were instantly sold and carried into Arabia: but the two priests were still slaves at Masuah, while Bruce was there.

"The priests of Axum," says Bruce, "and those of the monastery of Abba Garima, are equally infamous with those of Damo for this practice, which is winked at by Ras Michael as contributing to his greatness, by furnishing fire-arms to his provinces of Tigré, which gives him superiority over all Abyssinia. As a return for these fire-arms, about five hundred of these unfortunate people are annually exported from Masuah to Arabia; of which three hundred are Pagans from the market at Gondar; the other two hundred are Christian children kidnapped. The Naybe receives six patakas of duty for each one exported."

On the 25th of November, Bruce and his party left Dixan, and, descending the very steep hill on

which the town is situated, they reached an immense daroo-tree, seven and a half feet in diameter, with a head spreading in proportion. This tree, and the rivulet on which it stands, mark the boundary of that part of Tigré, which the Naybe of Masuah farms or rents of the Governors of Abyssinia. One of Bruce's servants delighted (as they all were) to get out of the dominions of Masuah, no sooner reached this tree, than he made a mark on the ground with his knife, and swore thereupon that if any one belonging to the Naybe dared to cross it, he would bind him hand and foot and leave him to the lions and the hyænas. The Naybe's people, on this hint, at once retired. Their presence had been a source of constant alarm to Bruce, who always felt that he owed his life to the advice and assistance he had received from Achmet. "We remained," says Bruce, "under this tree the night of the 25th. It will be to me a station ever memorable, as the first where I recovered a portion of that tranquillity of mind, to which I had been a stranger ever since my arrival at Masuah."

The next day the party, having been joined by several Moors, proceeded; and Bruce, while on his journey, was visited by a person of some distinction in the country, from whom he purchased a black horse. "I was exceedingly pleased," he says, "with this first acquisition. The horse was then lean, and he stood about sixteen and a half hands high, of the breed of Dongola. Yasmine, a good horseman, recommended to me one of his servants, or companions, to take care of him. He was an Arab, from the neighbourhood of Medina, a superior horseman himself, and well versed in every thing that concerned the animal. I took him immediately into my service. We called the horse Mirza, a name of good fortune.

Indeed, I might say, I acquired that day a companion that contributed always to my pleasure, and more than once to my safety ; and was no slender means of acquiring me the first attention of the king. I had brought my Arab stirrups, saddle, and bridle with me, so that I was now as well equipped as a horseman could be." Bruce being now entirely the guide and guardian of his own party, carefully examined the state of their fire-arms, which he ordered to be cleaned and charged again.

After passing a very pleasant wood of acacia trees, which were then in flower, they came to a plain "so overgrown with wild oats, that it covered the men and their horses." The soil was excellent ; yet this fine country was found almost in a state of nature on account of some disputes which raged so fiercely among the neighbouring villages, that the people were in the habit of going, with weapons in their hands, to sow the small portion of land which they cultivated, and to reap the harvest.

Bruce now reached a river, where he had learned that caravans were very constantly robbed. He, therefore, for the first time, mounted his black horse Mirza, and to the great delight and astonishment of his party, and of those who had joined them, galloped and paraded the animal in every direction, firing from his back in the Arab fashion, all of which had its due weight by giving him, in the minds of his rude attendants, a superiority which induced them to obey and to place confidence in the orders of one who appeared to them so well fitted to command.

Having now entered a rocky, uneven country, covered with brushwood, wild oats and high grass, they presently found on the ground a very fine animal of the goat species which had just been attacked by a lion. It was scarcely dead ; and as the blood

was still running, every one, Moor and Christian, cut out a portion of the flesh. The general aversion of the Abyssinians to any thing that has not been regularly killed with a knife is so great, that they will not even lift a bird that has been shot, except by the point or extreme feather of its wing; but to this rule, as it now appeared, they make a very singular exception in favour of any animal which has been killed by a lion. They now crossed the clear and rapid river Bazelat, which falls into the Mareb, or ancient Astusaspe. This was the first running water which they had seen since they passed Tarenta, this part of Abyssinia being very badly watered. They were here requested to pay a duty or custom, which, in many parts of Abyssinia, is levied on all passengers. These places are called ber, or passes, and there are five of them between Masuah and Adowa. But Bruce, having been sent for by the king, and being on his road to Ras Michael, told the people at the pass that they might keep his baggage, and that he would proceed without it; in consequence of which threat a very slight duty was required from him.

Proceeding onwards, they passed a high rock, resembling the Acropolis of Athens, or the rock upon which stands Edinburgh Castle. This pinnacle was called Damo, and it was here that the heirs male of the royal family of Abyssinia were imprisoned, until the massacre of the princes by Judith.

The houses now began to appear with conical roofs, a sure sign that the rains of the country were very violent. The village of Kaibara they found to be entirely inhabited by Mahometan Gibbertis, or native Abyssinians of that religion. They were here stopped by a ber, where they were detained three whole days, from the extravagant demands which were made upon them, and which nothing that Bruce or his party

could say would induce the people to diminish. "They had reasons," says Bruce, "for our reasons, menaces for our menaces, but no civilities to answer ours."

Bruce found it so impossible to satisfy these people, that, with great artifice and difficulty, he managed to send a letter by one of the natives to Janni, head of the custom-house at Adowa, to inform him of his detention. On the morning of the fourth day, an officer from Janni arrived with a violent mandate in the name of Ras Michael, which produced an immediate effect, and Bruce, on the 4th of December, was again enabled to proceed.

He now passed a river called Angueah, the largest he had seen in Abyssinia. This river receives its name from a beautiful tree which covers its banks. A variety of flowers, particularly yellow, white, and party-coloured jasmine, fill the plain which lies between the mountain and this stream. The air was fresh, fragrant, and agreeable. "We now first began to see," says Bruce, "the high mountains of Adowa, nothing resembling in shape those of Europe, nor, indeed, any other country. Their sides were all perpendicular rocks, high, like steeples or obelisks, and broken into a thousand different forms." However, after travelling on a very pleasant road, over easy hills, and through hedge-rows of jasmine, honey-suckle, and many other kinds of flowering shrubs, they arrived, on the 6th of December at Adowa, the town in which Ras Michael had used to reside.

Adowa is situated at the foot of a hill, on the west side of a small plain, watered by three streams, and surrounded on all sides by mountains. It is the pass through which every one must go in travelling from Gondar to the Red Sea, and indeed its name signifies "pass or passage." The town consisted of about

three hundred houses, each dwelling being enclosed by hedges and trees. Adowa was not formerly the capital of Tigré, but at the time of Bruce's arrival it was considered as such, because the property of Ras Michael surrounded it. His house was on the top of a small hill, and was not remarkable for its size. It was inhabited during the Ras's absence by his deputy, and resembled a prison rather than a palace; for in and about it more than three hundred people were confined in irons, the object of their imprisonment being to extort money from them. Many had been there twenty years; they were kept in cages, and in every way treated like wild beasts.

Bruce had scarcely arrived at Adowa, before Janni, the Greek officer of the customs to whom he had written on his arrival at Masuah, waited upon him. "He had," says Bruce, "sent servants to conduct us from the passage of the river, and met us himself at the outer door of his house. I do not remember to have seen a more respectable figure. He had his own short white hair, covered with a thin muslin turban, and a thick well-shaped beard as white as snow, down to his waist. He was clothed in the Abyssinian dress, all of white cotton, only he had a red silk sash, embroidered with gold, about his waist, and sandals on his feet: his upper garment reached down to his ankles. He had a number of servants and slaves about him, of both sexes; and, when I approached him, seemed disposed to receive me with marks of humility and inferiority, which mortified me much, considering the obligations I was under to him, the trouble I had given, and was unavoidably still to give him. I embraced him with great acknowledgments of kindness and gratitude, calling him father,—a title I always used in speaking either to him or of him afterwards, when I was in

higher fortune, which he constantly remembered with great pleasure.

“He conducted us through a court-yard planted with jasmine, to a very neat, and, at the same time, large room, furnished with a silk sofa: the floor was covered with Persian carpets and cushions. All round, flowers and green leaves were strewed upon the outer yard: and the windows and sides of the room stuck full of evergreens, in commemoration of the Christmas festival that was at hand. I stopt at the entrance of this room: my feet were both dirty and bloody; and it is not good-breeding to show or speak of your feet in Abyssinia, especially if anything ails them, and at all times they are covered. He immediately perceived the wounds that were upon mine. Both our clothes and flesh had been torn to pieces at Tarenta, and several other places; but he thought we had come on mules furnished us by the Naybe; for the young man I had sent to him from Kella, following the genius of his countrymen, though telling truth was just as profitable to him as lying, had chosen the latter, and seeing the horse I had got from the Baharnagash, had figured in his own imagination a multitude of others, and told Janni, that there were with me horses, asses, and mules in great plenty; so that when Janni saw us passing the water, he took me for a servant, and expected, for several minutes, to see the splendid company arrive well mounted upon horses and mules caparisoned.

“He was so shocked at my saying that I had performed this terrible journey on foot, that he burst into tears, uttering a thousand reproaches against the Naybe for his hard-heartedness and ingratitude, as he had twice, as he said, hindered Michael from going in person, and sweeping the Naybe from the face of

the earth. Water was immediately procured to wash our feet; and here began another contention. Janni insisted upon doing this himself, which made me run out into the yard, and declare I would not suffer it. After this, the like dispute took place among the servants. It was always a ceremony in Abyssinia to wash the feet of those that came from Cairo, and who are understood to have been pilgrims at Jerusalem.

“This was no sooner finished than a great dinner was brought, exceedingly well dressed. But no consideration or entreaty could prevail upon my kind landlord to sit down and partake with me: he would stand, all the time, with a clean towel in his hand, though he had plenty of servants, and afterwards dined with some visitors, who had come, out of curiosity, to see a man arrived from so far. Among these were a number of priests, a part of the company which I liked least, but who did not show any hostile appearance. It was long before I cured my kind landlord of these respectful observances, which troubled me very much; nor could he ever wholly get rid of them—his own kindness and good heart, as well as the pointed and particular orders of the Greek patriarch, Mark, constantly suggesting the same attention.”

In the afternoon, Bruce had a visit from the Governor of Adowa, a tall, fine looking man, of about sixty years of age. He had just returned from an expedition against the inhabitants of some villages, having slain about a hundred and twenty men, and driven off a quantity of cattle. He told Bruce he much doubted whether he would be able to proceed, unless some favourable news came from Ras Michael, as the inhabitants of Woggora were plundering all descriptions of people going to Gondar, in order to distress the king and the troops of Ras Michael.

The houses of Adowa are of rough stone, cemented with mud instead of mortar. The roofs, which are in the form of cones, are thatched with a sort of reedy grass, rather thicker than wheat straw. In the surrounding country there are three harvests annually. The first seed-time is in July and August, in the middle of the rains, at which time they sow wheat, tocusso, teff, and barley. About the 20th of November they begin to reap, first the barley, then the wheat, and lastly the teff. Without any manure, they then sow barley alone, which they reap in February; and lastly, they sow teff or vetches, which are cut down before the first rains in April.

The country is sometimes completely overrun with rats and field mice, and to destroy these creatures they set fire to the straw, the only use to which they apply it. This is generally done just before the rains, and an amazing verdure instantly follows.

“The province of Tigré,” says Bruce, “is all mountainous; and it has been said, without any foundation in truth, that the Pyrenees, Alps, and Apennines, are but mole-hills compared to them. I believe, however, that one of the Pyrenees, above St. John Pied de Port, is much higher than Lamalmon; and that the mountain of St. Bernard, one of the Alps, is full as high as Taranta, or rather higher. It is not the extreme height of the mountains in Abyssinia that occasions surprise, but the number of them, and the extraordinary forms they present to the eye. Some of them are flat, thin, and square, in shape of a hearth-stone or slab, that scarce would seem to have been sufficient to resist the winds. Some are like pyramids, others like obelisks or prisms, and some, the most extraordinary of all the rest, pyramids pitched upon their points, with their base uppermost, which if it was possible, as it is not,

they could have been so formed in the beginning, would be strong objections to our received ideas of gravity."

Salt quotes the above description, which he takes great trouble to prove is "extravagant;" yet, at page 240, Salt himself describes the mountains of this province as follows:—"A THOUSAND different-shaped hills were presented to the view, which bore the appearance of having been dropped on an irregular plain;" and the strange formation which Bruce and Salt dwell on with so much wonder, is now fully understood to proceed from the violent action of rain, through a long series of ages, upon such a surface as that described by those travellers.

After having remained above a month at Adowa, Bruce, on the 10th of January, visited the remains of the famous convent of the Jesuits at Fremoga, which is on the opposite side of the plain to Adowa. This convent, which is about a mile in circumference, is substantially built of stones with mortar. The walls, about twenty-five feet in height, are flanked by towers loop-holed for musketry. In short it resembles a castle rather than a convent.

Bruce was now anxious, if possible, to proceed to Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia, and the political events of the day seemed to offer him an opportunity; for a sort of calm, like that which precedes a storm, had, for the moment, spread over the whole country. Ras Michael, having found that the old king Hatre Hammes did not suit him as he had expected, his imbecility being of too sluggish a description, ordered his breakfast to be poisoned; and, having thus got rid of him, he had just placed young Tecla Haimanout on the throne of his father. The Abyssinians had been wearied, rather than amused, by a series of events, none of which had been foreseen, and which had

ended in a manner which no one could have expected. Nobody liked Ras Michael, yet no man deemed it prudent either to speak or act against him. People, therefore, waited till he should either conquer or be conquered by his opponent and enemy, the rebel Fasil.

Of this calm, Bruce determined to avail himself, and he accordingly prepared to take leave of his friend Janni, "whose kindness, hospitality, and fatherly care had," says Bruce, "never ceased for a moment." This friend had most favourably recommended Bruce to the Iteghe, or queen mother, whose daughter, the beautiful Ozoro Esther, was married to old Ras Michael. He also wrote in Bruce's favour to the Ras, with whom his influence was very great; and indeed to all his acquaintances, Greeks, Abyssinians, and Mahometans.

On the 17th of January, 1770, Bruce and his party quitted Adowa to proceed to Gondar, and the following day they reached a plain in which stood Axum, which is supposed to have been the ancient capital of Abyssinia. "The ruins of Axum," says Bruce, "are very extensive, but, like the cities of ancient times, consist altogether of public buildings. In one square, which I apprehend to have been the centre of the town, there are forty obelisks, none of which have any hieroglyphics upon them. There is one larger than the rest still standing, but there are two still larger than this, fallen. They are all of one piece of granite, and on the top of that which is standing, there is a patera exceedingly well carved in the Greek taste."

"After passing the convent of Abba Pantaleon, called in Abyssinia 'Mantilles,' and the small obelisk situated on a rock above, we proceeded south by a road cut in a mountain of red marble, having on the

left a parapet wall above five feet high, solid, and of the same materials. At equal distances there are hewn in this wall solid pedestals, upon the tops of which we see the marks where stood the colossal statues of Sirius, the Latrator Anubis, or Dog Star. One hundred and thirty-three of these pedestals, with the marks of statues just mentioned, are still in their places; but only two figures of the dog remained, much mutilated, but of a taste easily distinguished to be Egyptian. They were composed of granite; but some of them appear to have been of metal.

“There are likewise pedestals whereon the figures of the Sphinx have been placed. Two magnificent flights of steps, several hundred feet long, all of granite, exceedingly well-fashioned, and still in their places, are the only remains of a magnificent temple. In the angle of this platform, where that temple stood, is the present small church of Axum, in the place of a former one destroyed by Mahomet Gragne, in the reign of King David III.; and which was probably the remains of a temple built by Ptolemy Euergetes, if not the work of times more remote.

“The church is a mean, small building, very ill kept, and full of pigeons’ dung. In it are supposed to be preserved the ark of the covenant, and copy of the law, which Menilek, son of Solomon, is said, in their fabulous legends, to have stolen from his father Solomon on his return to Ethiopia, and these were reckoned, as it were, the palladia of this country.

“There was another relic of great importance. It is a picture of Christ’s head crowned with thorns, said to be painted by St. Luke, which, upon occasions of the utmost importance, is brought out and carried with the army, especially in a war with Mahometans and Pagans.

“Within the outer gate of the church, below the

steps, are three small square inclosures, all of granite with small octagon pillars in the angles, apparently Egyptian; on the top of which formerly were small images of the dog-star, probably of metal. Upon a stone, in the middle of one of these, the king sits, and is crowned, and always has been since the days of Paganism; and below it, where he naturally places his feet, is a large oblong slab like a hearth, which is not of granite, but of freestone. The inscription, though much defaced, may be safely restored.

ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΕΤΕΡΕΤΟΥ
ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ.”

Bruce made a sketch of the principal obelisk at Axum. Salt, who also visited Axum, says, “I went to take a drawing of the obelisk still erect. I found it to be extremely different from the representation of it given by Bruce; the ornaments which he is pleased to call triglyphs and metopes, and guttæ, being most regularly, instead of irregularly, disposed, as will be seen in my representation of it. I am now perfectly satisfied that all Bruce’s pretended knowledge of drawing is not to be depended on, the present instance affording a striking example of his want of veracity and uncommon assurance.” Again, Salt says: “From my account of Axum it will appear that Bruce’s description of ‘the mountain of red marble’ of the ‘wall, cut out of the same five feet high,’ with its ‘one hundred and thirty three pedestals, on which stood colossal statues of the dog-star, two of which only were remaining,’ and of the road cut between the wall and the mountain, are statements contrary to the existing fact, or at least so extremely exaggerated, as to cast strong doubts upon his authority.”

Again, Salt says, “I made a drawing of the Ozoro (a lady of rank) which I can assure the reader gives

an accurate delineation of the costume of a lady of her rank, although it has no resemblance to the fancy figures given in the last edition of Bruce as Abyssinian princesses." "It is extremely vexatious," says Lord Valentia at Masuah, "that Mr. Bruce's assertion of blue cloth being preferred by the Bedouee, should have prevented our bringing any white, which would have ensured us a ready supply of all we wished."

Nothing can show the narrow-minded feeling with which Salt travelled more than the above observations. Neglecting the great book of nature which was lying open before him, he seemed to have been only occupied with a paltry desire minutely to criticise Bruce's heavy volumes, which he very unfairly carried in his hand instead of in his head. With respect to the ruins of Axum, antiquarians have always been permitted to form their own conjectures on subjects of this kind, without being accused of "falsehood," or even of "exaggeration;" and every person, who has ever attempted to copy inscriptions in hieroglyphics, the meaning of which he cannot penetrate, must confess that parts and figures, which to him may seem to be highly important, might have been very excusably hurried over as unworthy of attention by another traveller.

Again, with respect to the costume of the Abyssinian ladies, more than one-third of a century had elapsed between Bruce's departure from, and Salt's arrival in, Abyssinia, and why, therefore, should Mr. Salt have taken it for granted that the costumes must needs have continued as Bruce left them?—but the Ozoros, of whose costumes Bruce gave drawings, were ladies of another province—they were the ladies of Gondar! Bruce never said that the fashions of Abyssinia were unalterable, nor that the Bedouee would prefer blue cloth to white for ever and ever.

It is most surprising that Salt and Lord Valentia should have used such expressions against Bruce, whose general history and observations the former invariably admits to be correct. Even at Axum, he says—"In the evening, I wrote down the best account I could get from the books of Axum, of Ras Michael, and his rebellion in Tigré against the Emperor Yasous; his standing a siege on the mountain of Samargat; and his subsequent concession and pardon, to which the emperor with difficulty acceded; *all which confirms the historical account of the same transactions, as related by Bruce.*" "The revolutions," continues Salt, "have been still more frequent since the departure of Mr. Bruce, *whose history is in general accurate.*" . . . Again, page 227, Salt says—"We also derived some benefit from the information, relative to the history of Abyssinia, which we had acquired from Bruce and Poncet; and *which was to the natives a source of perpetual astonishment.* Bruce's drawings of Gondar and its vicinity, which we showed to the Baharnagash, *tended to raise us in his opinion almost beyond the level of mortality.*" If, therefore, Bruce's grand historical account of Abyssinia is correct, ought he, by men of rank and education, to have been accused of "falsehood," "exaggeration," and "want of veracity," because, after a lapse of thirty-five years, some antiquities which he described had disappeared, and because the dresses of the ladies were found to be different from those he described? But Salt's illiberality towards Bruce was really but "the sign of the times," for the whole world was against him!

Salt gives a translation of one of the inscriptions at Axum, which he says shows that the Abyssinian monarchs have no claim to a descent from Solomon,

but that they considered they were descended from Mars! The inscription states—"We Aeizanus, sovereign of the Axomites," (&c. &c. &c.) "king of kings, son of God the invincible Mars."

Lord Valentia, of course, supports Mr. Salt's discovery: He says, "The account of the descent from Solomon is now proved to be false by the inscription of Axum." Yet this inscription says nothing against the descent from King Solomon. In it Aeizanus certainly calls himself "son of the invincible Mars;" but, within the tropics, that may surely only be an hyperbole, meaning that he considered himself a hero, which among men of all climates is no uncommon mistake. After all, however, Bruce never said that the kings of Abyssinia were descended from Solomon; he only said that this tradition is still believed by the Abyssinians and all the surrounding countries; and this statement is not only perfectly correct, but, what is much better, it is perfectly possible; whereas, the speculation of Mr. Salt, although it is certainly strongly supported by Lord Valentia at Masuah, must be erroneous, because we know that no such person as Mars ever existed, and that he is nothing but

a false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain.

On the 20th, Bruce quitted the ruins of Axum. The road from every side was, in the course of a few miles, perfumed with a variety of flowering shrubs, chiefly different species of jasmine. The country around had the most beautiful appearance; "and the weather," says Bruce, "was neither too hot nor too cold."

Bruce now happened to witness a scene, which must be given in his own words:—

"Not long after our losing sight of the ruins of this ancient capital of Abyssinia," says Bruce, "we

overtook three travellers driving a cow before them ; they had black goat-skins upon their shoulders, and lances and shields in their hands ; in other respects they were but thinly clothed ; they appeared to be soldiers. The cow did not seem to be fatted for killing, and it occurred to us all that it had been stolen. This, however, was not our business, nor was such an occurrence at all remarkable in a country so long engaged in war. We saw that our attendants attached themselves in a particular manner to the three soldiers that were driving the cow, and held a short conversation with them. Soon after, we arrived at the hithermost bank of the river, where I thought we were to pitch our tent. The drivers suddenly tripped up the cow, and gave the poor animal a very rude fall upon the ground, which was but the beginning of her sufferings. One of them sat across her neck, holding down her head by the horns ; the other twisted the halter about her fore-feet ; while the third, who had a knife in his hand, to my very great surprise, in place of taking her by the throat, got astride upon her belly before her hind-legs, and gave her a very deep wound in the upper part of her buttock.

“ From the time I had seen them throw the beast upon the ground, I had rejoiced, thinking that, when three people were killing a cow, they must have agreed to sell part of her to us ; and I was much disappointed upon hearing the Abyssinians say that we were to pass the river to the other side, and not encamp where I intended. Upon my proposing they should bargain for part of the cow, my men answered, what they had already learned in conversation, that they were not then to kill her ; that she was not wholly theirs, and they could not sell her. This awakened my curiosity. I let my people go forward,

and stayed myself behind, till I saw, with the utmost astonishment, two pieces, thicker and longer than our ordinary beef steaks, cut out of the higher part of the buttock of the beast. How it was done I cannot positively say ; because, judging the cow was to be killed from the moment I saw the knife drawn, I was not anxious to view the catastrophe, which was by no means an object of curiosity : whatever way it was done, it surely was adroitly ; and the two pieces were spread upon the outside of one of their shields.

“ One of them still continued holding the head, while the other two were busied in curing the wound. This too was done not in the ordinary manner : the skin, which had covered the flesh that was taken away, was left entire, and flapped over the wound, and was fastened to the corresponding part by two or more small skewers, or pins. Whether they put anything under the skin, between that and the wounded flesh, I know not ; but at the river-side where they were, they had prepared a cataplasm of clay, with which they covered the wound ; they then forced the animal to rise, and drove it on before them, to furnish them with a fuller meal when they should meet their companions in the evening.”

It was upon this fact that Bruce's reputation split, and sunk like a vessel which had suddenly struck upon a rock. His best English friends had warned him of the danger, and had earnestly begged him to suppress the publication of a story which, in his conversation, had been universally disbelieved ; but, sorely as he felt the insult, which he as yet had but privately received, it was against his nature to shrink from any unjust degradation which the public might fancy it was in its power to inflict upon him. A man like Bruce, who had steadily looked real danger in the face, was not to be stopped in his just career

by threats of imaginary danger. He, therefore, nobly, resolutely, or, as his friends termed it, "most obstinately," published the fact: and the following observations, with which he accompanied it, plainly show his wounded feelings and his undaunted integrity—his contempt of the world, or rather of the narrow-minded faction which opposed him—and his manly confidence that, sooner or later, truth would prevail.

"When first," says Bruce, "I mentioned this in England, as one of the singularities which prevailed in this barbarous country, I was told by my friends it was not believed. I asked the reason of this disbelief, and was answered, that people who had never been out of their own country, and others well acquainted with the manners of the world (for they had travelled as far as France), had agreed the thing was impossible, and therefore it was so. My friends counselled me farther, that as these men were infallible, and had each the leading of a circle, I should by all means obliterate this from my journal, and not attempt to inculcate in the minds of my readers the belief of a thing, that men, who had travelled, pronounced to be impossible. They suggested to me, in the most friendly manner, how rudely a very learned and worthy traveller had been treated for daring to maintain that he had ate part of a lion, a story I have already taken notice of in my introduction. They said, that being convinced, by these connoisseurs, his having ate part of a lion was impossible, he had abandoned this assertion altogether, and afterwards only mentioned it in an appendix; and this was the farthest I could possibly venture. Far from being a convert to such prudential reasons, I must for ever profess openly, that I think them unworthy of me. To represent as truth a thing I know to be a falsehood, not to avow a truth I ought to declare; the one is fraud,

the other cowardice: I hope I am equally distant from them both; and I pledge myself never to retract the fact here advanced, that the Abyssinians do feed in common upon live flesh, and that I myself have, for several years, been partaker of that disagreeable and beastly diet. On the contrary, I have no doubt, when time shall be given to read this history to an end, there will be very few, if they have candour enough to own it, that will not be ashamed of ever having doubted."

Bruce, trusting to the justness of this appeal, gave more credit to his readers than they deserved, for they all broke down under the weight of this unusual fact, and all ranks of people, from Dr. Johnson, the moralist, down to Peter Pindar and the author of Baron Munchausen, ridiculed and disbelieved Bruce's statement, which indeed, generally speaking, is not credited even at the present day. That to eat raw beef, cut out of a living cow, is not one of our English customs, is most true; but it is equally true that there is nothing in this statement which an acquaintance with human nature, as developed in various well-known parts of the world, does not most strongly and fully corroborate. Its improbability can only be maintained by two arguments; first, the nauseousness of the food; and, secondly, the cruelty of the means of obtaining it.

With respect to raw beef being nauseous, it may at once be observed, that "*de gustibus non est disputandum*," and consequently that we ought only to say, it would be nauseous *to us*. In fact, even Salt, who was by no means an unprejudiced man, after having eaten raw beef in Abyssinia, says, "I am satisfied it is merely prejudice which deters us from this food." But, admitting that it is nauseous, that forms no proof whatever that it is not likely to be the food of man, for it is well known that there is no

animal that feeds so grossly as we do. Captain Parry, for instance, thus describes, in different places, the appetites of the human beings it became his fortune to visit :—

“ It is impossible to describe the horribly disgusting manner in which they sat down, as soon as they felt hungry, to eat their raw blubber, and to suck the oil remaining on the skins we had just emptied. I found that Pootooalook had been successful in bringing in a seal, over which two elderly women were standing, armed with large knives, their hands and faces besmeared with blood, and delight and exultation depicted on their countenances. All the loose scraps were put into the pot for immediate use, except such as the two butchers now and then crammed into their mouths, or distributed to the numerous and eager bystanders, for still more immediate consumption. Of these morsels, the children came in for no small share, every little urchin that could find its way to the slaughter-house, running eagerly in, and between the legs of the men and women presenting its mouth for a large lump of raw flesh, just as an English child of the same age might do for a piece of sugar-candy.” . . . “ As soon as this dirty operation was at an end, during which the numerous bystanders amused themselves in chewing the intestines of the seal,” “ they dropped their canoes astern to the whale’s tail, from which they cut off enormous lumps of flesh, and ravenously devoured it.”

A hundred other examples might be given of the nauseous food upon which men in different countries have been found to subsist; but the above extracts are sufficient to contradict the first argument against Bruce’s statement, and they also offer a very remarkable example of the effect which the criticism of the day may have upon the credulity or incredulity of

the public; for it is surely even more difficult to believe that a people can eat raw fish blubber, than that a people can eat raw beef—the one being so much more nauseous than the other—and yet the first statement has never for a moment been doubted, while the other is scarcely yet believed; the reason being simply, that the ruling critics of Bruce's time were opposed to the African discoveries of Bruce, and that those now in the ascendant have all along been eager to support the discovery of the North Pole, and everything which relates to it. Captain Parry and Bruce, therefore, although they were equally honourable men, and equally anxious to contribute to our knowledge of this earth, met with very different fates. The one was justly rewarded, the other most unjustly despised.

In reply to the second argument against Bruce's statement, namely, its cruelty, we refer, first of all, to the slave-trade, which exists over such a vast portion of the globe, and which indisputably proves that man is cruel even to his fellow-creatures, and consequently, that it is only to be expected he would also be cruel to the beasts of the field; and that he is so, may be proved by the bull-fights in Spain, &c. &c. &c., where animals are subjected to the most horrid torture, merely for the amusement of men, women, and children. In one of Johnson's beautiful allegories, an old eagle is explaining to her brood, that when they see men assembling together, and fire flashing along the ground, they should hurry to the spot, because "the food of eagles is at hand." One of the brood exclaiming against the cruelty of men fighting thus against each other, observes, "I could never kill what I could not eat." This observation of the young eagle supports Bruce's statement; for if it is admitted that people will torture animals merely for amuse-

ment, it ought not to be disbelieved that they would also subject them to torture for the purpose of appeasing their hunger, by eating them, or a part of them.

Having endeavoured to show that there is nothing in Bruce's statement which was ever in the least degree deserving of disbelief, and that it is supported by a general knowledge of the world, it is very curious to reflect how strangely and how strongly it is corroborated by the customs even of our own country and countrymen. There is scarcely an officer in our navy who has not witnessed the common occurrence at sea, of sailors, and indeed officers, eating the tail of a shark, while the body is on deck alive and moving. At the corners of our streets, we daily see barrels of live oysters surrounded by groups of living men, the latter most deliberately eating the former. We also know that lobsters in this country are boiled alive! We daily see, or rather we avert our eyes, and very culpably we avert also our thoughts, from a much more shocking spectacle—we see English women with one hand firmly grasping, in a sanded cloth, the half-skinned writhing body of a wretched eel, while the other hand is violently stripping the rest of the skin from the body, which is then thrown into sharp sand—and while this dreadful act continues to be committed, and while no man thinks it worth his while to stand up in parliament as the advocate of those wretched creatures (an undertaking which would confer honour upon any man), is it not very curious to think that any person should have disbelieved Bruce's statement on account of the *cruelty* of the operation? for why should not men be barbarous and cruel in Abyssinia as well as in England?

With respect to the excessive delicacy of the English stomach, which affected to revolt with such horror

and disgust at the nauseousness of Bruce's statement, we will merely remind the reader of the one hundred and thirty-seven common sewers, which, besides gutters, from gas-works, dead animals, and other *et cæteras*, flow between Chelsea and the river Lea, near the Tower, into what we term "the majestic Thames." It is true, that cream, sugar, and a China cup, disguise and ornament the mixture: still, however, to use the motto of the learned Dr. Kitchiner, "There is death in the pot," and to a healthy-minded savage, it would certainly be totally incomprehensible how English people, rising from a dinner of putrid game and venison, could deliberately scandalise, over such horrid "tea," Bruce's simple statement, that he had at last reached a country, the inhabitants of which ate fresh meat raw.

Bruce's veracity has hitherto only been supported by general remarks; we now offer the evidence of several individuals.

It is well known that the celebrated traveller, Dr. Clarke, publicly examined, at Cairo, an Abyssinian deán respecting all Bruce's statements which at that time were disbelieved. Dr. Clarke says, vol. iii. p. 61, "Our next inquiry related to the long-disputed fact of a practice among the Abyssinians of cutting from a live animal slices of its flesh, as an article of food, without putting it to death. This Bruce affirms that he witnessed in his journey from Masuah to Axum. The Abyssinian, answering, informed us that the soldiers of the country, during their marauding excursions, sometimes maim cows after this manner, taking slices from their bodies, as a favourite article of food, without putting them to death at the time; and that, during the banquets of the Abyssinians, raw meat, esteemed delicious through the country, is frequently taken from an ox or a cow in

such a state, that the fibres are in motion, and that the attendants continue to cut slices till the animal dies. This answer exactly corresponds with Bruce's narrative: he expressly states, that the persons whom he saw were soldiers, and the animal a cow." "Jereme Lobo, who visited Abyssinia a hundred and fifty years before Bruce, page 51, says, 'When they feast a friend, they kill an ox, and set, immediately, a quarter of him raw upon the table.' Raw beef is their nicest dish, and is eaten by them with the same appetite and pleasure as we eat the best partridges."

Captain Rudland, R. N., who accompanied Salt, says, "The skin was only partly taken off, and a favourite slice of the flesh was brought immediately to table, the muscles of which continued to quiver till the whole was devoured."

Salt himself, in the journal which, in 1810, he writes for Pearce, the English sailor, says, page 295, "A soldier, attached to the party, proposed cutting out the *shulade* from one of the cows they were driving before them to satisfy the cravings of their hunger. This term Mr. Pearce did not at first understand, but he was not long left in doubt upon the subject; for the others, having assented, they laid hold of the animal by the horns, threw it down, and proceeded, without further ceremony, to the operation: This consisted of cutting out two pieces of flesh from the buttock, near the tail, which together, Mr. Pearce supposed, might weigh about a pound. As soon as they had taken these away, they sewed up the wounds, plastered them over with cow-dung, and drove the animal forwards, while they divided among their party the still reeking steaks."

(It is very singular that, in 1810, Salt could write these words, without offering any apology for having in his travels with Lord Valentia, in 1805, delibe-

rately stated that "his (Bruce's) account of the flesh cut out of living animals was repeatedly inquired into by our party; and all to whom we spoke denied its ever being done.")

Mr. Coffin, Lord Valentia's valet, who was left by him in Abyssinia, and who is now in England, has declared to us that he not only has seen the operation, which Bruce described, performed, but that he has even performed it himself, and that he did so at Cairo, in presence of an English nobleman of high character, whose name he referred to*.

Denham, in his *Travels in Central Africa*, vol. ii. page 36, says, "The best information I had ever procured of the road eastward, was from an old hadgi, named El Rashid, a native of the city of Medina; he had been at Waday, and at Sennaar, at different periods of his life, and, among other things, described to me a people east of Waday, whose greatest luxury was feeding on raw meat, cut from the animal while warm."

"Now do not be surprised," writes Sir Stamford Raffles to the Duchess of Somerset, "at what I shall tell you regarding the Battas, for I tell the truth, and nothing but the truth." "The evidence adduced by Mr. Marsden must have removed all doubt from every unprejudiced mind, that, notwithstanding all this in their favour, the Battas are strictly cannibals, but he has not gone half far enough. He tells us that, not satisfied with cutting off pieces and eating them raw, instances have been known where some of the people present have run up to the victim, and actually torn the flesh from the bones with their teeth. He also tells us that one of our residents

* We had a long conversation with Mr. Coffin on this subject. It ended, by our offering him a luncheon, which he ate with great avidity, of *raw beef-steaks*.

found the remains of an English soldier who had been only half eaten, and afterwards discovered his finger sticking on a fork laid by, but just taken warm from the fire." Sir Stamford Raffles proceeds to give other horrible details respecting human beings eating each other. "The palms of the hands," he says, "and the soles of the feet, are the delicacies of epicures."

This disgusting subject is now concluded. That it will have shocked the sensibility of the reader—that he will have termed it even

Unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly, unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility,

is but too certain; but it is equally true that the vindication, *coûte qui coûte*, is only common justice to Bruce's memory, and that the English public, who have been so cruelly careless of Bruce's feelings, have no right to complain of those facts which, before the world, repel the charges that have been unjustly brought against the character of an honest man.

On the 21st, Bruce and his party reached the plain of Lelech-lecha, which Poncet compares "to the most beautiful part of Provence." Fine trees of all sizes were everywhere interspersed, and small black grapes and honeysuckles hung in festoons from tree to tree, as if they had been artificially twined and intended for arbours.

While Bruce was loitering in this cheerful spot, he heard his servants cry, Robbers, robbers! His party had been taken for Mahometans, and the inhabitants had, therefore, resolved to attack them; however, Bruce made himself known, and, after being slightly bruised by a pumpkin which was thrown at him, succeeded in obtaining peace. Proceeding on his journey, he arrived late at night, on the 22nd,

at Siré, the largest town in the province of that name; but although Siré is situated in one of the finest countries in the world, yet putrid fevers of the worst description continually rage there; and as the inhabitants were not very civil to Bruce, he felt no inclination to expose himself to the infection for their sakes. He, therefore, at once left them and their fever behind him.

Bruce now learned that on the 10th Ras Michael had come up, at Fagitta, with the rebel Fasil (a man of low birth, who had been made governor of Damot and of the Agows), and had entirely dispersed his army, after killing ten thousand of his men.

Bruce continued his course for some days, until he came to the principal ford of the Tacazzé (the boundary of the province of Siré), a river about two hundred yards broad, and about three feet deep. In the middle of this stream he met a deserter from Ras Michael's army, with a firelock on his shoulder, driving before him two miserable girls, about ten years old, stark naked, and apparently almost starved to death—his horrid share in the plunder of Maitsha. "He had not," says Bruce, "in my eyes, the air of a conqueror, but rather of a coward, that had sneaked away, and stolen these two miserable wretches he had with him."

The banks of the Tacazzé were covered to the water's edge with tamarisks. "Beautiful and pleasant, however, as this river is," says Bruce, "like every thing created, it has its disadvantages. From the falling of the first rains in March till November, it is death to sleep in the country adjoining to it, both within and without its banks; the whole inhabitants retire and live in villages on the tops of the neighbouring mountains; and these are all robbers and assassins, who descend from their habit-

ations on the heights, to lie in wait for and plunder the travellers that pass. Notwithstanding great pains have been taken by Michael, his son, and grandson, governors of Tigré and Siré, this passage had never been so far cleared, but, every month, people are cut off.

“The plenty of fish in this river occasions more than an ordinary number of crocodiles to resort hither. When the river swells, so as to be passable only by people upon rafts, or skins blown up with wind, they are frequently carried off by these voracious and vigilant animals. There are also many hippopotami, which, in this country, are called gomari. I never saw any of these in the Tacazzé; but at night we heard them snort, or groan, in many parts of the river near us. There are also vast multitudes of lions and hyænas in all these thickets. We were very much disturbed by them all night. The smell of our mules and horses had drawn them in numbers about our tent; but they did us no further harm, except obliging us to watch.”

After travelling for several days through ruined villages, the monuments of Ras Michael's cruelty, they reached the river of Mai Lumi.

“The hyænas this night devoured one of the best of our mules. They are here in great plenty, and so are lions; the roaring and grumbling of the latter in the part of the wood nearest our tent, greatly disturbed our beasts, and prevented them from eating their provender. I lengthened the strings of my tent, and placed the beasts between them. The white ropes, and the tremulous motion made by the impression of the wind, frightened the lions from coming near us. I had procured from Janni two small brass bells, such as the mules carry. I had tied these to the storm-strings of the tent, where

their noise, no doubt, greatly contributed to our beasts' safety from these ravenous, yet cautious animals, so that we never saw them; but the noise they made, and, perhaps, their smell, so terrified the mules, that, in the morning, they were drenched in sweat as if they had been a long journey.

“The brutish hyæna was not so to be deterred. I shot one of them dead on the night of the 31st of January, and on the 2nd of February, I fired at another so near, that I was confident of killing him. Whether the balls had fallen out, or that I had really missed him with the first barrel, I know not, but he gave a snarl and a kind of bark upon the first shot, advancing directly upon me as if unhurt. The second shot, however, took place, and laid him without motion on the ground. Yasine and his men killed another with a pike; and such was their determined coolness, that they stalked round about us with the familiarity of a dog, or any other domestic animal brought up with man.”

But they were still more incommoded by a smaller enemy, a black ant, about an inch long, which, coming out from under the ground, demolished the carpets, which they cut into shreds, part of the lining of the tent, and every bag or sack they could find. Their bite causes a considerable inflammation, and the pain is greater than that which arises from the bite of a scorpion; they are called *gundan*.

On the 1st of February, the Shum of the place sent his people to value, as he said, Bruce's merchandise, that he might pay custom. “I humoured them,” says Bruce, “so far as to open the cases where were the telescopes and quadrant, or, indeed, rather showed them open, as they were not shut, from the observation I had been making. They could only wonder at things they had never before seen,

“On the 2nd of February the Shum came himself, and a violent altercation ensued. He insisted upon Michael's defeat. I told him the contrary news were true, and begged him to beware lest it should be told to the Ras, upon his return, that he had propagated such a falsehood. I told him also we had advice that the Ras's servants were now waiting for us at Lamalmon, and insisted upon his suffering us to depart.”

“He said that I was mad; and held a consultation with his people for about half an hour, after which he came in again, seemingly quite another man, and said, he would despatch us on the morrow, which was the 3rd, and would send us that evening some provisions. And, indeed, we now began to be in need, having only flour barely sufficient to make bread for one meal next day. The miserable village on the cliff had nothing to barter with us; and none from the five villages about the Shum had come near us, probably by his order. As he had softened his tone, so did I mine. I gave him a small present, and he went away repeating his promises. But all that evening passed without provision, and all next day without his coming, so we got everything ready for our departure. Our supper did not prevent our sleeping, as all our provision was gone, and we had tasted nothing all that day since our breakfast.”

The country of the Shangalla lies forty miles to the N.W. All this district from the Tacazzé is called Salent, in the language of Tigré, and Talent in Amharic.

On the 4th of February, at half-past nine in the morning, they left Addergey; “hunger pressing upon us,” says Bruce, “we were prepared to do it earlier, and for this we had been up since five in the morning; but our loss of a mule obliged us, when we

packed up our tent, to arrange our baggage differently. While employed in making ready for our departure, which was just at the dawn of day, a hyæna, unseen by any of us, fastened upon one of Yasmine's asses, and had almost pulled his tail away. I was busied at gathering the tent-pins into a sack, and had placed my musket and bayonet ready against a tree, as it is at that hour, and the close of the evening, you are always to be on guard against banditti. A boy, who was servant to Yasmine, saw the hyæna first, and flew to my musket. Yasmine was disjoining the poles of the tent, and, having one half of the largest in his hand, he ran to the assistance of his ass, and in that moment the musket went off, luckily charged with only one ball, which gave Yasmine a flesh wound between the thumb and fore-finger of his left hand. The boy instantly threw down the musket, which had terrified the hyæna, and made him let go the ass; but he stood ready to fight Yasmine, who, not amusing himself with the choice of weapons, gave him so rude a blow with the tent-pole upon his head, that it felled him to the ground; others, with pikes, put an end to his life.

“ We were then obliged to turn our cares towards the wounded. Yasmine's wound was soon seen to be a trifle; besides, he was a man not easily alarmed on such occasions. But the poor ass was not so easily comforted. The stump remained, the tail hanging by a piece of it, which we were obliged to cut off. The next operation was actual cautery; but, as we had made no bread for breakfast, our fire had been early out. We, therefore, were obliged to tie the stump round with whip-cord, till we could get fire enough to heat an iron.

“ What sufficiently marked the voracity of these beasts, the hyænas, was, that the bodies of their dead

companions, which we hauled a long way from us, and left there, were almost entirely eaten by the survivors the next morning; and I then observed, for the first time, that the hyæna of this country was a different species from those I had seen in Europe, which had been brought from Asia or America."

Bruce did not leave Addergey till near ten o'clock in the morning of the 4th of February. On reaching the river, he saw the Shum coming from the right, with nine horsemen, and fourteen or fifteen beggarly footmen. The Shum, preceded by a well-dressed young man carrying his gun, had only a whip in his own hand; the rest had lances, but none of the horsemen had shields. Bruce and his party had no doubt that these people were coming against him, or indeed that there were others before ready to join them, for it was clear that nine horses would not venture to do anything.

"Our people," says Bruce, "were now all on foot, and the Moors drove the beasts before them. I got immediately upon horseback, when they were then about five hundred yards below, or scarcely so much. As soon as they observed us drive our beasts into the river, one of their horsemen came galloping up, while the others continued at a smart walk. When the horseman was within twenty yards' distance of me, I called upon him to stop, and, as he valued his life, not to approach nearer. On this he made no difficulty to obey, but seemed rather inclined to turn back. As I saw the baggage all laid on the ground, at the foot of a small round hill, upon the gentle ascent of which my servants all stood armed, I turned about my horse, and with Yasine, who was by my side, began to cross the river. The horseman upon this again advanced; again I cried to him to stop.

He then pointed behind him, and said, 'The Shum!' I desired him peremptorily to stop, or I would fire; upon which he turned round, and the others joining him, they held a minute's counsel together, and came all forward to the river, where they paused a moment, as if counting our number, and then began to enter the stream. Yasmine now cried to them in Amharic, as I had done before in Tigré, desiring them, as they valued their lives, to come no nearer. They stopped, a sign of no great resolution; and, after some altercation, it was agreed the Shum, and his son with the gun, should pass the river.

"The Shum complained violently that we had left Addergey without his leave, and now were attacking him in his own government upon the high road. 'A pretty situation,' said I, 'was ours at Addergey, where the Shum left the king's stranger no other alternative but dying with hunger, or being eaten by the hyæna. Now, pray, Shum, tell me what is your business with me; and why have you followed me beyond your government, which is bounded by that river?'—He said, 'That I had stolen away privately without paying custom.'—'I am no merchant,' replied I; 'I am the king's guest, and pay no custom; but, as far as a piece of red Surat cloth will content you, I will give it you, and we shall part friends.'

"I now gave orders to my people to load the mules. At hearing this, the Shum made a signal for his company to cross; but Yasmine, who was opposite to them, again ordered them to stop. 'Shum,' said I, 'you intend to follow us, apparently with a design to do us some harm. There is a piece of ordnance,' continued I, showing him a large blunderbuss, 'a cannon that will sweep fifty such fellows as you to eternity in a moment.'

“The conversation lasted about five minutes ; and our baggage was now on the way, when the Shum said he would make a proposal :—since I had no merchandise, and was going to Ras Michael, he would accept of the red cloth, provided we swore to make no complaint of him at Gondar, nor speak of what had happened at Debra Toon ; while he likewise would swear, after having joined his servants, that he would not again pass that river. Peace was concluded upon these terms. I gave him a piece of red Surat cotton cloth, and added some cohol, incense, and beads for his wives.”

The mountain-range of Hauza was about eight miles distant, and had a very romantic appearance. At one o'clock, Bruce alighted about half way between the mountain called Debra Toon and village of that name. Still further to the north-west is a desert, hilly district, called Adebarea, the country of the slaves, as being the neighbourhood of the Shanggalla—the whole waste and uninhabited.

The mountains of Waldubba, resembling those of Adebarea, were about four or five miles towards the north of Waldubba, which signifies the valley of the hyæna. This is a territory entirely inhabited by monks, who, for mortification's sake, had retired to this unwholesome, hot, and dangerous country, voluntarily to spend their lives in penitence, meditation, and perspiration. It is also a retreat for great men in disgrace or in disgust. They shave their hair, put on a cowl like the monks, renounce the world, and take vows of solitude and celibacy ; but in process of time these holy chrysalises return like butterflies to the world, leaving their outward skin, the cowl and sack-cloth, in Waldubba.

These monks are held in great veneration. Many believe that they have gifts of prophecy, and work-

ing miracles, and they are very active instruments in stirring up the people in times of trouble. A number of women, whom we should call nuns, though not residing in Waldubba, go at times thither to enjoy the conversation of these saints; nay, sometimes the devotees retire, one of each sex, a hermit and a nun, sequestering themselves for months, to eat herbs together in private upon the top of the mountain.

Violent fevers perpetually reign there. The inhabitants are of the colour of a corpse; and their neighbours, the Shangalla, by constant inroads, destroy many of them, though lately they have been stopped, as they say, by the prayers of the monks, or rather by the small-pox, which has greatly reduced their strength and number, and exterminated, to a man, whole tribes of them.

The Abyssinians, like all secluded and illiterate people, are highly superstitious. Jereme Lobo says that the whole country so swarms with churches, "that you can hardly sing in one without being heard in another." Alvarez says that sub-deaconship and inferior orders in the church are conferred even on infants at the breast. The Jesuits very justly ridiculed these "sucking priests," forgetting, however, those ecclesiastical animalculæ of their own—those cocked-hatted, robin-legged little priestlings, that, to this day, one sees hopping about the streets of Rome.

There is scarcely a monk in the hot, unwholesome monastery of Waldubba—not a hermit who passes his life shivering on the bleak, solitary mountains,—not a priest who has lived sequestered from society,—who does not pretend that he is enabled to see and foretel what is to happen in future, from his perfect ignorance of the present and the past. All women, who choose to renounce acquaintance with men, are

allowed to turn priests ; they then wear a skull-cap, like the men ; and these priests, male and female, all pretend to possess charms of a nature both offensive and defensive, which are most generally believed in. Even the hyænas, which every night flock round Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia, attracted by the smell of carrion, are considered to be the human inhabitants of the neighbouring mountains, transformed by enchantment. The Abyssinians, almost to a man, are afraid of darkness, during which period they conceive that the world belongs to small vindictive genii. In the Synaxar, or history of their saints, one is said to have thrown the devil over a high mountain ; another (who probably chanced to pick him up) persuaded him to live as a monk for forty years ; another had a holy longing for partridges, upon which a brace perched on his plate—martyrs ready roasted ! Salniel, the chief of their rebel angels, is supposed to be in stature “ 100,700 cubits, angelic measure ;” his eyebrows are said to be three days’ journey asunder ; and it takes him just a week to turn his eyes !

“ All the Abyssinians,” writes Pearce, the English sailor, after he had given up Mahometanism, “ have a father or confessor, and I myself am obliged to have, or pretend to have, one of these holy fathers, else it would not be allowed that I was a Christian, and perhaps create many enemies that would disturb my dwelling. It is a very unprofitable thing to fall out with these priests, as every thing is in their hands ; the whole country of Abyssinia is overrun with them. The very smallest church, that is not larger than a small sheep-pen that would not hold more than fifty sheep, built with mud and stone, and thatched over with canes and dry grass, has from fifteen to twenty of these impostors, who devour all

the fruits of the poor labouring country people. The larger churches have from fifty to one hundred: Axum, Larlabeller (Lallabella), have some thousands. Waldubba is the most famous for them, where the wretches pretend that, being holy men, they ride upon lions which God has provided for them."

In mentioning the superstitions of Abyssinia, it may here be observed, that there are various kinds of complaints in that country which are supposed to be caused by the devil. One of Pearce's wives was afflicted with one of these disorders, in describing which, Pearce, in his letter to the Bombay Literary Society, honestly acknowledges, that he himself "thinks the devil *must* have some hand in it;" and most certainly no earthly physician ever met with such a patient as Mrs. Pearce.

"After the first five or six days," says the husband, "she began to be continually hungry, and would eat five or six times in the night—never sleep; and she, like all others troubled with this complaint, called a man 'she,' and a woman 'he.'" Indeed the poor creature was so severely afflicted with her unaccountable disorder, that, in the presence of her friends, she even addressed, in the wrong gender, Mr. Pearce, calling him "she," or, more probably, "it;" "for," says Pearce, "it vexed me so much that I swore she should not stop in the house."

The remedy for this disorder is about as mysterious as its symptoms. The woman has an unaccountable inclination to run. "The fastest running young man," says Pearce, "that can be found is employed by her friends to run after her with a match-lock well loaded, so as to make a good report: the moment she starts, he starts with her, but before she has run the distance, where she drops as if she were dead, he is left half-way behind. As soon as he comes

up to her, he fires right over her body, and asks her name, which she then pronounces, although during the time of her complaint she denies her Christian name, and detests all priests or churches. Her friends afterwards take her to the church, where she is washed with holy water, and is then cured."

It is some comfort, however, to learn that the disorders of Abyssinia are not all of this unearthly incomprehensible description. "The itch," says Pearce, "is common, from the king to the very lowest subject."

Since passing the Tacazzé, Bruce and his party had been in a country wild by nature, and still wilder from having been the theatre of civil war. The whole was a wilderness without inhabitants. They at last reached a plain filled with flowering shrubs, roses, jasmynes, &c., and animated by a number of people passing to and fro. Several of these were monks and nuns from Waldubba, in pairs two and two together. The women, who were both young and stout, were carrying large burdens of provisions on their shoulders, which showed that they did not entirely subsist upon the herbs of Waldubba. The monks, their "compagnons de voyage," had sallow faces, yellow cowls, and yellow gowns.

After travelling some days, Bruce reached Lamalmon, one of the bers or passes at which the customs and other duties are levied with great rigour and violence. An old man and his son had the right of levying these contributions: the former professed a violent hatred to all Mahometans,—a sentiment which seemed to promise nothing favourable to Yasmine and his companions; but in the evening, the son, who appeared to be the active man, came to Bruce's tent, and brought a quantity of bread and bouza. He seemed to be much taken with the fire-arms, and was very inquisitive about them. "I gave him," says

Bruce, " every sort of satisfaction, and, little by little, saw I might win his heart entirely; which I very much wished to do, that I might free our companions from bondage.

" The young man, it seems, was a good soldier; and, having been in several actions under Ras Michael, as a fusileer, he brought his gun, and insisted on shooting at marks. I humoured him in this; but, as I used a rifle, which he did not understand, he found himself overmatched, especially by the greatness of the range—for he shot straight enough. I then showed him the manner we shot flying, there being quails in abundance, and wild pigeons, of which I killed several on wing, which left him in the utmost astonishment. Having got on horseback, I next went through the exercise of the Arabs with a long spear and a short javelin. This was more within his comprehension, as he had seen something like it; but he was wonderfully taken with the fierce and fiery appearance of my horse, and, at the same time, with his docility, the form of his saddle, bridle, and accoutrements. He threw at last the sandals off his feet, twisted his upper garment into his girdle, and set off at so furious a rate, that I could not help doubting whether he was in his sober understanding.

" It was not long till he came back, and with him a man servant carrying a sheep and a goat, and a woman carrying a jar of honey-wine. I had not quit-
ted the horse; and, when I saw what his intention was, I put Mirza to a gallop, and, with one of the barrels of the gun, shot a pigeon (a common feat among the Arabs), and immediately fired the other into the ground. There was nothing after this that could have surprised him, and it was repeated several times at his desire; after which he went into the tent, where he invited himself to my house at Gondar.

There I was to teach him everything he had seen. We now swore perpetual friendship; and a horn or two of hydromel being emptied, I introduced the case of our fellow-travellers, and obtained a promise that we should have leave to set out together. He would, moreover, take no *awide*, and said he would be favourable in his report to Gondar.

“Our friend likewise sent his own servant to Gondar, with the billet to accompany the caravan. But the news brought by his servant was still better than all this. Ras Michael had actually beaten Fasil; and forced him to retire to the other side of the Nile, and was then at Maitsha, where it was thought he would remain with the army all the rainy season. This was just what I could have wished, as it brought me at once to the neighbourhood of the sources of the Nile, without the smallest shadow of fear or danger.”

Although Bruce speaks thus lightly and fearlessly of his difficulties, yet to the unprejudiced reader it must be evident how impossible it would have been for him to have surmounted them, without that general knowledge of mankind, and those various and unusual accomplishments which, for many years previous to commencing his undertaking, he had steadily, strenuously, and painfully exerted himself to acquire.

As the reader accompanies him on his toilsome rugged course, he cannot but observe his intimate acquaintance with the passions and prejudices of the African character; and although Bruce has been cruelly ridiculed for his occasional frivolity of conduct, contrasted with an abrupt dignity of demeanour, yet it is but too evident that it was with a heart aching rather than trembling at the danger which opposed him, that he assumed this front of haughtiness as his only weapon of defence. In a climate which produces but two characters, he was forced to

be either the tyrant or the slave, and was obliged to govern that he might not serve. Yet with what tact and judgment has he already, in many instances, "changed his hand and checked his pride," the moment he found it was impolitic to persevere; though we see him resolutely proceeding towards his goal, yet he is not seldom observed to retreat from positions which he had declared he would maintain, and to pay duties and make presents which he had for some time obstinately refused.

But besides his acquaintance with manners and languages, it is curious to observe how, to meet different difficulties, he draws upon his chequered fund of general information.

Sometimes he is a physician, pretending to greater knowledge than he actually possesses; at other times he is seen protesting a total ignorance of the art. We have seen with what success he brought forward his knowledge of astrology at Cairo, and we have now just left him "winning the heart" of a young man by "putting Mirza to a gallop, and with one of the barrels of his gun shooting a pigeon in the air!"

In the harsh judgment of those who gravely make it a rule to disapprove of, and even to ridicule every thought or action which quiet English domestic life has not stamped as regular and customary, Bruce must (at their expense, not at his own) be still considered as a mountebank and a juggler, sometimes living by his head, sometimes hanging by his heels; but those who liberally take into their consideration the unusual difficulties which stemmed his solitary progress, will see, in the many lines and features of his conduct, the noble picture of a brave man successfully struggling with adversity.

On the 9th of February, at seven o'clock, Bruce, and his party took leave of the friends whom they

had so newly acquired at Lamalmon, all equally joyful and happy at the news. They began to ascend what still remained of the mountain; till, after much labour, they reached the lofty summit of Lamalmon, which is highly cultivated, and is inhabited by the most civilised people in Abyssinia.

After travelling over this extensive and valuable country for some days, and having suffered, with infinite patience and perseverance, the hardships and dangers of this long journey, Bruce on the 14th of February (ninety-five days having elapsed since he left Masuah), enjoyed the proud and indescribable delight of seeing before him, and within ten miles' distance, Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia.

CHAPTER XI.

Bruce resides at Gondar, and gradually raises himself to distinction.

GONDAR, the metropolis of Abyssinia, is situated upon the flat summit of a hill of considerable height, and was peopled, in the time of Bruce, by about ten thousand families. The houses are chiefly of clay, with conical roofs—the usual construction within the tropical rains. At the west end of the town stands the king's house, a square building flanked by towers. It was formerly four stories high, and had a magnificent view of the country southward, to the great lake Tzana. A part of this palace had been burnt, but the lower floors remained entire, the principal audience chamber being more than a hundred and twenty feet in length.

The palace, as well as the buildings which belonged to it, were surrounded by a stone wall thirty feet high, and broad enough for a parapet and path. The four sides of this wall were about a mile and a half in length.

On the opposite side of the river Angrab stood a large town of Mahometans, which contained about one thousand houses; and at the north of Gondar was situated Koscam, the palace of the Iteghe, or queen mother.

Bruce was much surprised, on arriving at the river Angrab, that no person had come to him from Petros, Janni's brother; but Petros having been

frightened by the priests, who told him that a Frank was on his way to Gondar, had fled to the Ras to receive his directions on the subject. There was, therefore, no one to whom Bruce could address himself; for, though he had letters both for the king and for Ras Michael, they, as well as the principal Greeks, were absent.

Nothing, therefore, remained for him but to present a letter, which he had received from his friend Janni, to Negade Ras Mahomet, who was chief of the Moors at Gondar, and the principal merchant of Abyssinia. However, on inquiring for this person, he learnt that he also was with the king and the army. In this dilemma, a Moor intimately acquainted with Negade Ras Mahomet, conducted Bruce to a house in the Moorish Town, where he promised that he should be screened from the priests until he could procure protection from the government, or from the great people of the country. He was to be supplied with flour, honey, and such food as Moors and Christians may eat together; but although there was a great abundance of animal food, yet, as it had been killed by Mahometans, Bruce did not dare to touch it.

Ayto Aylo, the queen's chamberlain, was not only the constant patron of the Greeks in Abyssinia, but was privately a great enemy to the priests of his own country; and he had often declared that he would willingly abandon the title and estates which he held in Abyssinia, and go to Jerusalem, to finish the remainder of his days in the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre.

Late in the evening of his arrival, Bruce's landlord was alarmed at seeing a number of armed men at his door, and his surprise was still greater at seeing Ayto Aylo (who had probably never before been in the Moorish Town) descend from his mule,

uncovering his head and shoulders, as if he had been approaching a person of distinction.

On his entering the house, a contention of civilities ensued. Bruce offered to stand until Aylo was covered, and he refused to sit until Bruce was seated. Their discourse commenced in Arabic, but it was soon continued in Tigré, the language most used in Gondar. Aylo seemed astonished to hear Bruce speak this language so well; and, turning round to the bystanders, he observed, "Come, come, he'll do! if he can speak, there is no fear of him; he'll make his own way!"

Aylo then told Bruce, that Welled Hawaryat, the son of Ras Michael, had arrived from the camp ill of a fever, which was supposed to be the small-pox; and that, as Janni had declared that Bruce had saved the lives of many young people at Adowa, the Iteghe, or queen mother, had sent to desire that he would come next morning to her palace at Koscam. Accordingly, Bruce, dressed in a Moorish costume, and attended by his landlord and Yasine, went early the next day to Ayto Aylo, and then, with their heads uncovered, the whole party rode in state to Koscam, where they alighted, and were shown into a low room in the palace. Ayto Aylo went by himself to his mistress the queen, with whom he remained more than two hours. On returning to Bruce, he said that Welled Hawaryat had received much benefit from a saint of Waldubba, who had administered some medicine, which consisted of certain characters written with common ink upon a tin-plate, and then washed off and given him to drink. Aylo therefore dismissed Bruce, but appointed a meeting with him at his own house in the evening.

When Bruce returned home, he found that Petros, Janni's brother, had arrived from the army, and was

waiting for him. Scared by the priests who had told him of Bruce's arrival at Gondar, Petros (as has been already stated), in great tribulation, had fled to consult Ras Michael. However, on approaching his tent, he suddenly recognised the stuffed skin of a very intimate friend of his swinging from a tree, and leisurely drying in the wind. Terrified and horror-struck at the spectacle, he was scarcely able to communicate to a person who met him the intelligence of Bruce's arrival; and then, without seeing the Ras, he returned, haunted by the ghost of his friend's skin, to Gondar, in still greater fear than he had left it; and he even there continued to be so much alarmed, that Bruce found it necessary to give him some laudanum, and send him to bed.

He had scarcely retired, when Ayto Aylo came to Bruce to say that Welled Hawaryat was so very ill, that his mother, Ozoro Esther, the beautiful wife of old Ras Michael, and the Itege, or queen mother, desired that Bruce, on the following day, would come to see him, and some others, who were also sick.

"Look!" said Bruce to Ayto Aylo, "the small-pox is a disease that will have its course, and during the long time the patient is under it, if people feed them and treat them according to their own ignorant prejudices, my seeing him or advising him is in vain. This morning you said a man had cured him by writing upon a tin-plate, and, to try if he was well, they have since crammed him with raw beef. I do not think the letters that he swallowed will do him any harm, neither will they do him any good; but I shall not be surprised if the raw beef kills him and the sick daughter too before I see them to-morrow."

In the morning Petros was still ill and feverish, from fatigue and fright. However, Bruce left him,

and, accompanied by Aylo, again proceeded towards Koscam. They were just entering the palace door when they saw a numerous procession of monks and priests, carrying a large cross, also a picture in an old dirty gilt frame; and they were informed that three great saints, from Waldubba (one of whom, a sort of holy chameleon, declared that he had neither eaten nor drank for twenty years), had come to cure Welled Hawaryat by laying upon him a cross and a picture of the Virgin Mary; in consequence of which prescription, Bruce was requested not to meddle with the patient. "I assure you, Ayto Aylo," replied Bruce, "I shall strictly obey you. If they can cure him by a miracle, I am sure it is the easiest kind of cure of any, and will not do his constitution the least harm afterwards, which is more than I will promise for medicines in general; but remember what I say to you, it will be a miracle indeed, if both the father and daughter are not dead before to-morrow night."

After the procession, in great solemnity, had passed, Aylo again went to the Iteghe. Bruce was then formally introduced, and according to the custom of Abyssinia, he immediately prostrated himself on the ground, falling first on his knees, then on the palms of his hands, and lastly touching the earth with his forehead. Aylo then said, "This is our gracious mistress; you may safely say before her whatever is in your heart."

"Our first discourse," says Bruce, "was about Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre, Calvary, the City of David, and the Mountain of Olives, with the situations of which she was perfectly well acquainted. She then asked me to tell her truly if I was not a Frank? 'Madam,' said I, 'if I was a Catholic, which you mean by Frank, there could be no greater

folly than my concealing this from you in the beginning, after the assurance Ayto Aylo has just now given; and, in confirmation of the truth I am now telling (she had a large Bible lying on the table before her, upon which I laid my hand), I declare to you, by all those truths contained in this book, that my religion is more different from the Catholic than yours is: that there has been more blood shed between the Catholics and us, on account of the difference of religion, than ever was between you and the Catholics in this country; even at this day, when men are become wiser and cooler in many parts of the world, it would be full as safe for a Jesuit to preach in the market-place of Gondar, as for any priest of my religion to present himself as a teacher in the most civilised of Frank or Catholic countries.' 'How is it then,' says she, 'that you do not believe in miracles?'

" 'I see, madam,' said I, 'Ayto Aylo has informed you of a few words that some time ago dropped from me. I do certainly believe the miracles of Christ and his apostles, otherwise I am no Christian; but I do not believe these miracles of latter times wrought upon trifling occasions, like sports and jugglers' tricks.' 'And yet,' says she, 'our books are full of them.' 'I know they are,' said I, 'and so are those of the Catholics; but I never can believe that a saint converted the devil, who lived, forty years after, a holy life as a monk; nor the story of another saint, who, being sick and hungry, caused a brace of partridges, ready roasted, to fly upon his plate that he might eat them.' 'He has been reading the Synaxar,' says Ayto Aylo. 'I believe so,' says she, smiling; 'but is there any harm in believing too much, and is not there great danger in believing too little?' 'Certainly,' continued I; 'but all I

meant to say to Ayto Aylo was, that I did not believe laying a picture upon Welled Hawaryat would recover him when delirious in a fever.' She answered, 'There was nothing impossible with God.' I made a bow of assent, wishing heartily the conversation might end there."

Bruce, leaving Aylo with the queen, now returned to the Moors' town. In the afternoon he heard Welletta Selasse was dead; and, at night, died also Welled Hawaryat. The contagion from Masuah and Adowa had spread itself all over Gondar. The daughter of Ozoro Altash was now sick, and a violent fever had fallen upon Koscam. The next morning Aylo came to Bruce and told him, that all faith in the saint, who had not eaten or drunk for twenty years, was perfectly abandoned since Welled Hawaryat's death: that it was the desire of the queen, and Ozoro Esther, that he should transport himself to Koscam, to the Iteghe's palace, where all their children and grand-children, by the different men the queen's daughters had married, would be placed under his care.

One cannot help here remarking the favourable effect produced by the strong manly sense which always seems to have regulated Bruce's conduct. His sound religious sentiments (like Paul before Festus) he does not fear to avow; although a stranger in the land, he firmly declares to the Iteghe, that he has no faith in the miraculous remedy proposed for Welled Hawaryat; and yet, a few minutes before, he was seen prostrating himself in the dust at the feet of the very person (the Iteghe) whose opinions he was so shortly about to oppose; but Bruce's mind clearly saw those distinctions which to so many are imperceptible. He had no paltry objections to conform to the vain customs

of Abyssinia; no narrow inclination to address the Iteghe in a foreign language of respect, which she could not comprehend, by offering that stunted nod—the English bow, when an African obeisance, such as she had been used to, was required: mistaken firmness or obstinacy on this point would have at once ruined all his hopes. Again, had he, from fear or any other weakness, concealed his opinions as to religion, or the fallacy of the remedy administered to Welled Hawaryat, not only would his testimony as a traveller have deservedly been suspected, but he would, after all, have lost the opportunity which we now see most justly raised him in the opinion of the Iteghe. It was Bruce's good sense as well as his resolution—it was his head as well as his heart which enabled him to penetrate the regions of Abyssinia.

Bruce at first declined attending the Iteghe, as Petros had desired him to stay in the Moors' town till the Ras should arrive, but Aylo again came to him to say that he must come immediately.

“I told him,” says Bruce, “that new and clean clothes in the Gondar fashion had been procured for me by Petros, and that I wished they might be sent to his house, where I would put them on, and then go to Koscam, with a certainty that I carried no infection with me; for I had attended a number of Moorish children, while at Hagi Saleh's house, most of whom happily were doing well, but that there was no doubt there would be infection in my clothes. He praised me up to the skies for this precaution, and the whole was executed in the manner proposed. My hair was cut round, curled, and perfumed in the Amharic fashion, and I was thenceforward, in all outward appearance, a perfect Abyssinian.”

Bruce's first advice, when arrived at Koscam, was, that the young and beautiful Ozoro Esther, her son

by Mariam Barea, and a son by old Ras Michael, should remove from the palace, in order to give the part of the family that were yet well a chance of escaping the infection. Her young son by Mariam Barea, however, complaining, the Iteghe would not suffer him to remove, and they resolved to abide the issue all in the palace together.

Before Bruce entered upon his charge, he desired Petros, who had now recovered from his fright, Aylo, and several others to assemble. He then frankly stated to them the difficulty of the task imposed upon him, a stranger, without acquaintance, protection, power, or controul. He professed an intention of doing his utmost, but he insisted that one condition should be granted him, namely, that no directions as to regimen, and management, even of the most trifling kind, should be suffered, without his permission and superintendence. They all assented to this, and a priest who was present, not only declared those excommunicated who should break this promise, but he literally offered to Bruce the assistance of his prayers, and those of the monks, morning and evening ; Aylo whispered in his ear, "You need have no objection to this saint ; I assure you he eats and drinks very heartily, as I shall show you when once these troubles are over."

Bruce now set to work. He opened all the doors and windows, washed them with warm water and vinegar, and adhered strictly to the rules which his worthy and skilful friend, Dr. Russell, had given him at Aleppo. A treatment of the disorder, so different from the suffocating system which had hitherto been adopted in Abyssinia, had very successful results, and Bruce mentions a number of cures which he effected, amongst which was that of the infant child of Ras Michael, adding, "I tell these actions to satisfy the

reader about the reason of the remarkable attention and favour showed to me afterwards, upon so short an acquaintance." The fear and anxiety of Ozoro Esther, whose son, a most promising boy, was infected, was excessive; many promises of Michael's favour, of riches, greatness, and protection, followed every instance of Bruce's care and attention towards his patient. Confu, the favourite of all the queen's relations, and the hope of their family, had convulsions which every one feared would be fatal. The attention Bruce showed to this young man was increased by a prepossession in his favour, which he had taken up at first sight of him. "Policy," says Bruce, "as well as charity, alike influenced me in the care of my other patients; but an attachment, which Providence seemed to have inspired me with for my own preservation, had the greatest share in my care for Ayto Confu."

Bruce's patients, being at last all likely to do well, were removed to a large house, which, however, stood within the boundaries of Koscam, while the rooms underwent another lustration and fumigation, after which the patients returned; and Bruce got, as his fee, a present of a house which had a separate entry, without going through the palace: however, as he had now received most positive orders from Ras Michael not to leave the Iteghé's palace, until further orders, he thought it better to obey this mandate to the letter, and not stir out of Koscam, not even to his landlord's, or to Ayto Aylo's, though both of them frequently endeavoured to persuade him that the order had not so strict a meaning. This leisure time Bruce employed in mounting his instruments, his barometer, thermometer, telescopes, and quadrant. Of course all was now wonder, and he lost a good deal of time in satisfying the curiosity

of the palace. One day, as he was leaving the presence of the queen, in came Abba Salama, who was the first religious officer in the palace. He had a very large revenue, and a still greater influence. He was exceeding rich, and although he had taken vows of poverty and chastity, he had at that time above seventy mistresses in Gondar, an establishment which formed but an odd commentary on his text. Exceedingly eloquent and bold, he had been a great favourite of the Iteghe, or queen mother, was a man of a pleasing countenance, short, and of a very fair complexion. At first he did not know Bruce, from his change of dress: but soon after recollecting him, he called him back, and, after some words, he asked him in a pert tone of voice, if he would answer him a question to which it was not at all Bruce's policy to reply, namely, "how many natures are there in Christ?" "I thought," answered Bruce to Salama, who, during the whole period of his residence in Abyssinia, was always his enemy, "the question to be put, was something relating to my country, travels, or profession, in which I possibly could instruct Abba Salama; and not belonging to his, in which he should instruct me. I am a physician in the town, a horseman and soldier in the field. Physic is my study in the one, and managing my horse and arms in the other. This I was bred to; as for disputes and matters of religion, they are the province of priests and schoolmen. I profess myself much more ignorant in these than I ought to be; therefore, when I have doubts, I propose them to some holy man, like you, Abba Salama (he bowed for the first time), whose profession these things are. He gives me a rule, and I implicitly follow it." "Truth! truth!" says he; "by St. Michael, prince of angels, that is right; it is answered well; by St. George,

he is a clever fellow. They told me he was a Jesuit. Will you come to see me? You need not be afraid when you come to *me*." "I trust," said Bruce, bowing, "I shall do no ill, in that case I shall have no reason to fear." Upon this Bruce withdrew.

It was on the 8th or 9th of March that Bruce met Ras Michael at Azazo. This man, feared by almost every person in Abyssinia, was dressed in a coarse, dirty cloth, wrapped about him like a blanket, with a sort of table-cloth folded about his head: he was lean, old, had sore eyes, was apparently much fatigued, and sat stooping upon a favourite mule, that carried him speedily without shaking him. As Bruce saw the place where the Ras was to alight, which was marked by four cross lances, having a cloth thrown over them like a temporary tent, he did not speak to him; but a Greek priest told the Ras who Bruce was, and that he was come on purpose to meet him. The soldiers then made way, and Bruce advancing kissed his hand; after which Michael pointed to a place where he was to sit down. "A thousand complaints," says Bruce, "and a thousand orders came immediately before him from a thousand mouths, and we were nearly smothered; but he took no notice of me, nor did he ask for any one of his family." In some minutes after came the young king, who passed at some distance: Michael was then led out of the shelter of his tent to the door, where he was supported on foot. As the king passed by, he pulled off the towel that was upon his head, and then returned to his seat in the tent.

"All the town was in a hurry and confusion; thirty thousand men were encamped upon the Kahha; and the first horrid scene Michael exhibited there, was causing the eyes of twelve of the chiefs of the Galla, whom he had taken prisoners, to be pulled out, and

the unfortunate sufferers turned out to the fields, to be devoured at night by the hyænas." Two of these poor creatures Bruce took under his care; they both recovered, and from them he learned many particulars of their wild country and rude manners.

The next day, which was the 10th, the army marched into the town in triumph, and the Ras placed himself at the head of the troops of Tigré. He was bareheaded, with long hair as white as snow; over his shoulders, and down to his back, hung a cloak of black velvet with a silver fringe. A boy, at his right stirrup, held a silver wand of about five feet and a half long. Behind him all the soldiers, who had slain an enemy and taken the spoils from them, had their lances and firelocks ornamented with their horrid trophies, and also with small-shreds of scarlet cloth, one piece for every man he had slain.

"Remarkable among all this savage multitude was the door-keeper of the Ras. This man, always well armed and well mounted, had followed the wars of his master from his infancy, and had been so fortunate in this kind of single combat, that his whole lance and javelin, horse and person, were covered over with the shreds of scarlet cloth. At the last battle of Fagitta, this inhuman being is said to have slain eleven men with his own hand, most of them probably being wretched, weary, naked fugitives, mounted upon tired horses, or else flying on foot."

Behind, came Gusho, Governor of Amhara, and Powussen, lately made Governor of Begemder for his behaviour at this battle of Fagitta; and, as a farther reward, the Ras had given him his granddaughter, who, under Bruce's care, had just recovered from the small-pox.

"One thing most remarkable in this cavalcade, was the head-dress of the governors of provinces. A large

broad fillet was bound upon their forehead, and tied



behind their head. In the middle of this was a horn, or a conical piece of silver, gilt, about four inches long, much in the shape of our common candle-extinguishers. It is called *kirn*, or horn, and is only worn in reviews or parades after victory." This is probably taken from the Hebrews, and explains the several allusions which are made to it in Scripture. "And the horn of the righteous shall be exalted." (Psalms, &c. &c.)

Next to these governors came the king, with a fillet of white muslin, about three inches broad, binding his forehead, tied with a large double knot behind, and hanging down about two feet on his back. About him were his officers of state, the young nobility who

were without command, and, after these, the household troops.

Then followed the Kanitz Kitzera, or executioner of the camp, and his attendants; and, last of all, came a man bearing upon a pole the stuffed skin of Petros's unfortunate friend, which he hung before the king's palace, upon a branch of the tree appropriated for public executions.

The 13th of March arrived, without Bruce having heard from Ozoro Esther, or the Ras, though removed to a house in Gondar near to Petros. He had every day visited the children at Koscam, and been received with the greatest cordiality by the Iteghe, who had given orders for his free admission upon all occasions like an officer of her household. But he had been completely neglected excepting by the Moors, who were very grateful for the successful attention he had shown their children. In the evening, however, Negade Ras Mahomet, who was the chief of the Moors at Gondar, came to Bruce's house, and told him that Ayto Aylo had spoken several times to the Ras about him, and that it had been agreed between them that Bruce should be appointed Palambaras, which he translates, "Master of the king's horse," a very great office both for rank and revenue.

"I told Mahomet," says Bruce, "that far from being any kindness to me, this would make me the most unhappy of all creatures; that my extreme desire was to see the country, and its different natural productions; to converse with the people as a stranger, but to be nobody's master or servant; to see their books; and, above all, to visit the sources of the Nile; to live as privately in my own house, and have as much time to myself, as possible; and what I was most anxious about at present, was

to know when it would be convenient for them to admit me to see the Ras, and deliver my letters as a stranger." Mahomet went away, and returned bringing Mahomet Gibberti, who told Bruce that, besides the letter which Metical Aga, his master, had given to Bruce for Ras Michael, he had been charged with a particular one, out of the ordinary form, dictated by the English at Jidda, who all, particularly Bruce's friends Captain Thornhill and Captain Thomas Price of the Lion, had agreed to make a point with Metical Aga, who was devoted to them for his own interest, that his utmost exertion should be employed to induce Ras Michael to provide for Bruce's safety.

This letter from Metical Aga informed Michael of the power and riches of the English nation; that they were absolute masters of the trade on the Red Sea, and strictly connected with the Sherriffe of Mecca; that any accident happening to Bruce would be an infamy and disgrace to him, and worse than death itself, because, knowing Michael's power, and relying on his friendship, he had become security for Bruce's safety; that he was a man of consideration in his own country, servant to the king of it; that his only desire was to examine springs, rivers, trees, flowers, and the stars in the heavens, from which he drew knowledge very useful to preserve man's health and life; that he was no merchant,—had no dealings whatever in any sort of traffic; and stood in no need of any man's money, as Mahomet Gibberti was to provide any sum he might require.

“Upon reading this letter, Michael exclaimed, “Metical Aga does not know the situation of this country. Safety! where is that to be found? I am obliged to fight for my own life every day. Will Metical call this safety? Who knows, at this mo-

ment, if the king is in safety, or how long I shall be so? All I can do is to keep him with me. If I lose my own life and the king's, Metical Aga can never think it was in my power to preserve that of his stranger."—"No, no," said Ayto Aylo, who was then present, "but you don't know the man; he is a devil on horseback; he rides better, and shoots better, than any man that ever came into Abyssinia; lose no time, put him about the king, and there is no fear of him." It was therefore agreed, that the letters the Greeks had received should be read to the king, and that Bruce should be immediately introduced to the king and to the Ras.

The reader will remember that, when Bruce was at Cairo, he obtained letters from the Greek patriarch to the Greeks at Gondar; and particularly one, in form of a bull, addressed to all the Greeks in Abyssinia. In this, after a great deal of pastoral admonition, the patriarch said, that knowing their propensity to lying and vanity, and not being at hand to impose proper penances upon them for these sins, he ordered them in a body to go to the king in the manner and time they knew best, and to inform him that Bruce was not to be confounded with the rest of white men, such as Greeks, who were all subject to the Turks, and slaves; but that he was a free man of a free nation; that the best of them should be happy in being his servant, as one of their brethren then actually was. This was rather a bitter pill, for the Greeks were high in office, all except Petros, who had declined employment after the murder of king Joas, whose chamberlain he had been. The order of the patriarch, however, was fairly and punctually performed; Petros was their spokesman, and although a great coward, yet, on the present occasion, he was forward enough.

It was about the 14th that these letters were to be all publicly read; five in the evening was the hour appointed, and notice was sent to Koscam. A little before the time Bruce came, and met Ayto Aylo at the door. He squeezed him by the hand and said, "Refuse nothing, it can be all altered afterwards; but it is very necessary, on account of the priests and the populace, that you should have a place of some authority, otherwise you will be robbed and murdered the first time you go half a mile from home: fifty people have told me you have chests filled with gold, and that you can make gold, or bring what quantity you please from the Indies; and the reason of all this is, because you refused the queen and Ozoro Esther's offer of gold at Koscam, which you must never do again."

On entering, the old Ras was sitting upon a sofa; his white hair was hanging loose in many short curls. He appeared to be thoughtful, but not displeased; his countenance was most intelligent, his face was thin, his eyes quick and vivid, but still a little sore from exposure to the weather: he seemed to be about six feet high. Bruce, as usual, kissed the ground before him; of this he seemed to take little notice, but on his rising, he shook hands with him.

Bruce was then pressing to offer his present, when the Ras, with an air of natural dignity, thus calmly addressed him: "Yagoube, I think that is your name, hear what I have to say to you, and mark what I recommend to you. You are a man, I am told, who make it your business to wander in solitary places to search for trees and grass, and to sit up all night alone looking at the stars of heaven. Other countries are not like this, though this was never so bad as it is now. These wretches here are enemies to strangers; if they saw you alone in your own parlour, their first thought would

be how to murder you; though they knew they were to get nothing by it, they would murder you for mere mischief."—"The devil is strong in them," exclaimed a distant voice, which appeared to be that of a priest.) "Therefore," continued the Ras, "after a long conversation with your friend Aylo, I have thought that situation best which, leaving you at liberty to follow your own designs, will put your person in such safety, that you will not be troubled with monks about their religious matters, or in danger from these rascals that may seek to murder you for money."

"What are the monks?" muttered the voice from the same corner of the room; "the monks will never meddle with such a man as this."—"Therefore the king," continued the Ras, without taking any notice of the interruption, "has appointed you Baalomaal, and commander of the Koccob horse. Go, then, to the king, and kiss the ground upon your appointment: I see you have already learned this ceremony of ours; Aylo and Heikel are very proper persons to go with you." After taking leave of the Ras, Bruce had a short private interview with the beautiful Ozoro Esther, whose young heart was overflowing with gratitude to the man that had saved her child. He then proceeded towards the king's palace, and met Aylo at the door of the presence-chamber. Tecla Mariam, the king's secretary, walked before them to the foot of the throne, and after Bruce had advanced and prostrated himself upon the ground, he said facetiously, "I have brought you a servant from so distant a country, that if you ever let him escape, we shall never be able to follow him or know where to seek him." The king was sitting in an alcove; his mouth, according to the custom of Abyssinia, was covered; he evinced no alteration of countenance, and made no reply. The old questions were then put

to Bruce about Jerusalem and the holy places—where his country was? (they knew the situation of no country but their own)—why he came so far?—whether the moon and the stars were the same in his country as in theirs? &c. &c.

To escape from those interrogatories, Bruce had several times offered to take his present from the man who held it, that he might offer it to his majesty and go away; but the king as often made a sign to defer this. At last, after having kept Bruce standing so long that he was almost fainting from fatigue, the king proposed that, instead of returning with the Greeks, he should perform one of the duties of his employment, which was to take charge of the door of his bed-chamber that night. However, Ayto Heikel, taking courage, came forward to the king, pretending a message from the queen; and whispering something in his ear, he laughed, and dismissed them all.

They accordingly all hurried to supper in bad tempers, as is usual with hungry men. They brought with them from the palace three of Bruce's brother Baalomaals, and one who had stood to make up the number, though he was not in office: his name was Guebra Mascal; he was a sister's son of the Ras, and commanded one third of the troops of Tigré which carried fire-arms, that is, about two thousand men. He was reputed one of the best officers the Ras had; and was about thirty years of age, short, square, and well made, but with a very unpromising countenance. He was also very conceited, and had the greatest opinion of his own knowledge in the use of fire-arms, to which he did not scruple to say Ras Michael owed all his victories*.

* We are told in Mr. Salt's Journal, in vol. iii. of Lord Valentia's Travels, that Guebra Mascal, this very person, was made Governor of Tigré by Tecla Georgis in 1788, and, though deposed, died in 1805 much regretted.

During supper, Guebra Mascal, as usual, vaunted incessantly of his skill in fire-arms. Petros said, laughing, to him, "Now Yagoube (meaning Bruce) is come, he will teach you something worth talking about." They had all drunk abundantly: Guebra Mascal, full of wine and pride, uttered words in contempt of Bruce, who quickly replied by saying, that the end of a tallow-candle in his gun would do more execution than an iron ball in Guebra Mascal's! Guebra immediately rose up and gave Bruce a kick with his foot, calling him a Frank and a liar; on which Bruce, blind with passion, seized him by the throat, and threw him on the ground. Guebra Mascal drew his knife as he was falling, and gave Bruce a trifling wound on the crown of his head. Bruce wrested the knife from him, and struck him violently on his face; the combatants were then separated. The lifting of a hand in the precincts of the palace is punished in Abyssinia by death; Guebra Mascal, therefore, fled to the dwelling of Kefla Yasous, his relation,—but in a few hours he was in irons at the Ras's house. The next morning Bruce proceeded there by the advice of his friends, and having told his story, he at last succeeded in prevailing on the Ras to overlook the occurrence, and to forgive Guebra Mascal; in short, although the king had been made acquainted with it, the whole affair was made up. Bruce attended in his place, and received very great marks of royal favour; but he himself was so much annoyed at the circumstance, and at the many difficulties which seemed to interrupt his ultimate, and, indeed, his only object in visiting Abyssinia, that he almost resolved to abandon it, and ask permission to return by Tigré; "and to this resolution," says Bruce, "I was more inclined by the death of Balugani, a young man who accompanied me through Barbary, and who

assisted me in drawings of architecture : a dysentery which had attacked him in Arabia Felix, put an end to his life at Gondar." From the effects of the despondency Bruce's health became much impaired ; however, his melancholy was in some degree diverted by a general festivity in Gondar. Ozoro Esther's sister, the Itege's youngest daughter, and consequently the grand-daughter of Michael, was married to Powussen, the governor of Begemder. The king gave her large districts of land in that province, and Ras Michael a large portion of gold, muskets, cattle, and horses. Every one that wished to be well looked upon by either party, brought something considerable as a present. The Ras, Ozoro Esther, and Ozoro Altash, entertained all Gondar. A vast number of cattle were slaughtered every day, and the whole town was one great market ; the common people, in every street, appearing laden with pieces of raw beef, while drink circulated in like profusion. The Ras insisted upon Bruce's dining with him every day. After dinner they slipped away to parties of ladies, where anarchy prevailed as completely as at the house of the Ras. All the married women ate, drank, and smoked like the men ; in fact, it is impossible to convey to the English reader, in terms of proper decency, any idea of this bacchanalian scene.

Although the king's favour, the protection of the Ras, and Bruce's obliging, unassuming behaviour to everybody, had made him as popular as he could wish at Gondar, and amongst the Tigrans, yet it was easy to perceive that that "untoward" occurrence, his quarrel with Guebra Mascal, was not forgotten.

"One day," says Bruce, "when I was standing by the king in the palace, he asked, in discourse, 'Whether I, too, was not drunk in the quarrel with Guebra Mascal before we came to blows?' and upon my

saying that I was perfectly sober, he asked with a degree of keenness, 'Did you then soberly say to Guebra Mascal, that an end of a tallow candle in a gun in your hand, would do more execution than an iron bullet in his?' 'Certainly, Sir,' replied Bruce, 'I did so.' 'And why did you say this?' said the king; 'you will not persuade me that, with a tallow-candle, you can kill a man or a horse?' 'Pardon me, Sir,' said Bruce, bowing very respectfully, 'I will attempt to persuade you of nothing but what you please to be convinced of. When will you see this tried?' 'Why now,' says the king; 'there is *nobody here.*' 'The sooner the better,' said Bruce; 'I would not wish to remain for a moment longer under so disagreeable an imputation as that of lying, an infamous one in *my* country, whatever it may be in this. Let me send for my gun; the king will look out at the window.'

"The king appeared to be very anxious, and, I saw plainly, incredulous. The gun was brought; Engedan's shield was produced, which was of a strong buffalo's hide. I said to him, 'This is a weak one, give me one stronger.' He shook his head, and said, 'Ah, Yagoube, you will find it strong enough; Engedan's shield is known to be no toy.' Tecla Mariam had also brought such a shield, and the Bille-tana Gueta Tecla another, both of which were most excellent in their kind. I loaded the gun before them, first with powder, then upon it slid down one half of what we call a farthing candle; and, having beat off the handles of three shields, I put them close in contact with each other, and set them all three against a post.

"'Now, Engedan,' said I, 'when you please say—Fire! but mind you have taken leave of your good shield for ever.' The word was given, and the gun

fired. It struck the three shields, neither in the most difficult nor the easiest part for perforation, something less than half-way between the rim and the boss. The candle went through the three shields with such violence, that it dashed itself to a thousand pieces against a stone wall behind it. I turned to Engedan, saying very lowly, gravely, and without exultation or triumph, on the contrary, with absolute indifference, 'Did I not tell you your shield was nought?' A great shout of applause followed from about a thousand people that were gathered together. The three shields were carried to the king, who exclaimed in great transport, 'I did not believe it before I saw it, and can scarce believe it now I have seen it.'

Bruce then repeated this common schoolboy's experiment, by firing the other half of the candle through a table of sycamore. Some priests who were present, unable to comprehend the matter, voted it was done by "mucktoub" (magic), and so the wonder with them ceased. But it was not so with the king: "it made," says Bruce, "the most favourable and lasting impression upon his mind; nor did I ever after see in his countenance any marks either of doubt or diffidence, but always, on the contrary, the most decisive proofs of friendship, confidence, and attention, and the most implicit belief of everything I advanced upon any subject from my own knowledge."

One half of a farthing candle, in Bruce's hands, thus became a step in that ladder by which he managed, with such admirable ability, to raise himself to notice; and this anecdote, trifling as it may sound, affords a moral and a lesson worthy to be remembered by every man who attempts to penetrate a new country.

The possibility of the occurrence, however, many of Bruce's enemies have obstinately refused to believe. The experiment of firing a candle through a door is one which has very often been performed; and even if it had never been shown, it would be evident, to any one who reflected on the subject for a moment, that this result would unavoidably take place. The momentum, or force of a shot, is not the sole effect either of its weight or of its velocity, but the product of both. A light or soft body, propelled with great velocity, may therefore have an effect equal to that of a heavy or hard body, propelled with less velocity: for instance, air rapidly displaced by the passing of a cannon-shot, is known to produce very unexpected effects; and all sailors know how heavily water strikes when it falls with any velocity. But though a deal table and a tallow candle must have been at the disposal of the meanest of Bruce's critics, yet it cost them less, and was more agreeable, to accuse the traveller of falsehood, than to put his experiment to the proof, or to reason on the truth of his statements.

Salt himself, however, corroborates the story forty years afterwards. "In the course of the same day," he says, "these two Greeks paid me a visit; and I have seldom been acquainted with more venerable or respectable-looking men. The elder was exceedingly infirm, and appeared to be nearly blind—so that it was with some difficulty that he could be brought up, on a mule, into the room in which we were sitting. On being seated, he expressed great anxiety to examine my features, and repeatedly inquired whether I was any relation of Yagoube (Mr. Bruce).

"He afterwards conversed with me for some time respecting that traveller, and in almost every particular confirmed the account I have already quoted, upon the authority of Dofter Esther. He related in addi-

tion, that the Emperor Tecla Haimanout never paid much attention to Mr. Bruce till after '*his shooting through a table with a candle*'—a fact which I had never before heard mentioned in the country—when he became a great favourite and was called Baalomaal; he added that, on a particular occasion, the Emperor took a fancy to Mr. Bruce's watch, and asked him for it, but that that gentleman refused, and said abruptly—'Is it the custom in this kingdom for a king to beg?' which answer made a great noise throughout the court."

Bruce now received an instance of kindness from Ayto Confu, the son of Ozoro Esther, which gave him great pleasure. On the west of Abyssinia, adjoining the frontiers of Sennaar, there is a hot, unwholesome strip of low country inhabited only by Mahometans, and divided into several small districts, which are known by the general name of Mazuga.

Ayto Confu possessed several of the districts; one of which, Ras el Feel, having been always commanded by a Mahometan, as Bruce says, "had no rank among the great governments of the state." To this command Bruce was unexpectedly appointed, and was, in consequence, created by the king Governor of Ras el Feel, with permission to appoint his Moorish friend, Yasine, as his deputy. Bruce considered that he would be enabled by Yasine's friendship, to secure to his interests the Arabs and Sheikhs of Atbara; for he had already resolved to return to England by Sennaar, "and," as he says, "never to trust myself again in the hands of that bloody assassin, the Naybe of Masuah."

Salt has taken great pains to endeavour to prove that Bruce never was Governor of Ras el Feel. He says (forty years after Bruce had quitted the country) that people, several of whom must have been children when Bruce was in Abyssinia, told him they had

“*never heard*” that Bruce was Governor of Ras el Feel. Bruce, however, never said that he acted as governor of this district; he only says that he was appointed governor, with permission for his friend Yasine to act as his deputy, his object being merely to form an acquaintance with that barbarous country; and considering that, in such a country, appointments are not gazetted, Salt ought to have felt that Bruce’s statement might have been perfectly correct, although the people he met had “*never heard*” of it.

“I now,” says Bruce, “for the first time since my arrival in Abyssinia, abandoned myself to joy;” but his constitution was too much weakened to bear this excitement, and accordingly, the following day, when he went home to Emfras, he was visited, or rather attacked, by his old and relentless enemy the Bengazi ague. For some time he was unable to leave the house, and was even long confined to his bed: his journal barely mentions this illness, but his handwriting, during this period, shows very affectingly the weak and exhausted state of his frame.

The rebel Fasil had no sooner heard of Ras Michael’s return to Gondar than he marched against the Agows. A bloody battle was fought at one of their principal settlements, in which Fasil proved victorious. A council was forthwith held, in which Ras Michael declared that, although the rainy season was at hand, the king’s forces should immediately take the field.

Gusho and Powussen having sworn to Michael that they would never return without Fasil’s head, decamped next morning, but with the secret determination to arrange a formal conspiracy against the Ras.

While preparations were proceeding, the Iteghe, or queen-mother, seeing the declining state of Bruce’s health, frequently endeavoured to dissuade him from the undertaking which was apparently always upper-

most in his thoughts. "See! see!" said this royal moralist, "how every day of our life furnishes us with proofs of the perverseness and contradiction of human nature: you are come from Jerusalem, through vile Turkish governments, and hot, unwholesome climates, to see a river and a bog, no part of which you can carry away, were it ever so valuable—of which you have in your own country a thousand larger, better, and cleaner; and you even take it ill when I discourage you from the pursuit of this fancy, in which you are likely to perish, without your friends at home ever hearing when or where the accident happened. While I, on the other hand, the mother of kings, who have sat upon the throne of this country more than thirty years, have for *my* only wish, night and day, that, after giving up everything in the world, I could be conveyed to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and beg alms for my subsistence all my life after, if I could only be buried at last in the street within sight of the gate of that temple where our blessed Saviour once lay!"

It may here be observed, that this feeling still exists very generally and very strongly throughout Abyssinia.

The greatest happiness which, in the opinion of many of the Abyssinians, can be found in this life, is to reach Jerusalem. Burning with this desire, great numbers of men and women continually bid adieu to the happy valley in which they were born, to endeavour to perform this holy pilgrimage. The fate that awaits them is a sad return for the mistaken goodness and piety of their intentions; for, in crossing the Red Sea, they are almost always taken prisoners by Turks—and, far from happiness, Jerusalem, or their own country, they thus end their days in misery and slavery.

CHAPTER XII.

Bruce accompanies the King's Army, and returns with it to Gondar.

By the queen's permission, Bruce, for a short time, took up his abode at Emfras, situated on the east side of Tzana, the greatest lake in Abyssinia, being about fifty miles long, thirty-five broad, and containing several islands.

On the 13th of May, 1770, the king's army approached the town of Emfras, which, in a few hours, was completely deserted; for although Ras Michael was strict, and even just, in time of peace, yet it was known that the moment he took the field, like the tiger roused from his lair, he became licentious and cruel. The Mahometan town, near the water, was plundered in a moment: and some of the straggling troops came even to Bruce's residence to demand meat and drink. He therefore thought it prudent at once to repair to the king, and accordingly the next morning at daybreak he mounted his horse, and in a few hours reached the tents of his majesty and Ras Michael, which were placed about five hundred yards asunder,—no one daring to stand, or even pass, between them.

Although Bruce's appointment gave him a right of access at all times to the king, he did not choose at that moment to enter the royal presence, but preferred going to the tent of his kind and lovely friend, Ozoro Esther, where he was sure, at least, of

getting a good breakfast and a warm reception. As soon as Ozoro Esther saw Bruce, she exclaimed, "There is Yagoube! there is the man I wanted!" The tent was cleared of all but her women, and she began to tell Bruce of several complaints which she seemed to think would, before the end of the campaign, carry her to her grave. "It was easy to see," says Bruce, "that they were of the slightest kind, though it would not have been agreeable to have told her so, for she loved to be thought ill, to be attended, condoled with, and flattered!" After giving to his elegant and agreeable patient both advice and prescriptions, the doors of the tent were thrown open, and an abundant breakfast was displayed in wooden platters on the carpet.

The Abyssinian gourmands say, "that you should plant first and then water," which means that nobody should drink till he has finished eating. Stewed fowls, highly seasoned with Cayenne pepper, roasted Guinea-hens, and the never-failing *brind*, or raw beef, were eaten, therefore, in great quantities; after which wine, a beer called bouza, and hydromel, were drunk in equal proportion. Ozoro Esther, leaning forwards from her sofa, kindly reminded her guests that their time was short, and that the drum would soon give the signal for striking the tents. From this scene Bruce escaped to the king, where he learnt that Fasil was preparing to repass the Nile into the country of the Galla.

The next morning the king marched, and then remained for two days encamped on the banks of the Nile, where a trifling circumstance occurred. Old Ras Michael had long endeavoured to get possession of Welleta Israel, a sister of his own wife, Ozoro Esther, and, if possible, as lovely as herself. She now again refused his unnatural addresses, on

which he was heard to say that he would order her eyes to be pulled out.

Welleta Israel, at this time, was in the camp with her sister Ozoro Esther. In the evening, a small tent suddenly appeared on the opposite side of the Nile, which was not only both broad and deep, but, with its prodigious mass of water, a number of large, slippery stones were rolling along at the bottom of the river. In the dead of the night Welleta Israel escaped, and in the morning she and the tent had equally disappeared. To the astonishment of every person, it was found that she had actually crossed the river. She had fled from the vengeance of the Ras with an intrepid conductor, her own nephew, with whom she had for some time established a relationship nearer than propriety should have permitted.

The next morning the king crossed the Nile at a pass, and encamped, on the other side, near a small village called Tsoomwa, where his fit-auraris had taken post early in the morning. The fit-auraris (which means, literally, front of the army) is an officer, in the Abyssinian service, dependent only on the commander of the forces. He is always selected from the bravest, most robust, and most experienced men in the army. His duty is to mark out, by a lance, the position most proper for the king's tent; he is expected to know the depth of the rivers, the state of the fords, the extent and thickness of the woods: in short, to be acquainted with the general *carte du pays*. The governor of every province has an officer of this description. The fit-auraris may, therefore, be compared to an officer of the quartermaster-general's department in an European army.

From Tsoomwa the king marched to Derdera, and being now in the territory of his enemy, the

whole country was set on fire. Those who could not escape were slain, and all sorts of wanton barbarities were permitted.

The king's passage of the Nile was the signal agreed upon for Bruce to set out from Emfras to join him. Accompanied by Strates, a Greek, and other attendants, he travelled for several days, encountering many hardships and dangers: he at last met with his friend Negade Ras Mahomet (the chief of the Moors of Gondar), to whom he expressed his ardent desire to be enabled to visit the neighbouring cataract of the Nile. "Unless you had told me you was resolved," said Mahomet, with a grave, thoughtful air, though full of openness and candour, "I would in the first place have advised you not to think of such an undertaking. Again, if anything was to befall you, what should I answer to the king and the Iteghe? It would be said the Turk has betrayed him!"

"Mahomet," said Bruce, "you need not dwell on these professions; I have lived twelve years with people of your religion, my life always in their power, and I am now in your house, in preference to being in a tent out of doors, with Netcho and his Christians. I do not ask you whether I am to go or not, for that is resolved on; and, though you are a Mahometan, and I a Christian, no religion teaches a man to do evil. We both agree in this, that God, who has protected me thus far, is capable to protect me likewise at the cataract, and farther, if he has not determined otherwise, for my good. I only ask you, as a man who knows the country, to give me your best advice, how I may satisfy my curiosity in this point, with as little danger and as much expedition as possible, leaving the rest to Heaven." Mahomet accordingly promised to send his son and four

of his servants to protect Bruce; he then took leave of him, saying with much feeling, "Do not stay! return immediately, and—Ullah Kerim (God is merciful)!"

Early next morning Bruce mounted his horse, and accompanied by four active, resolute young men, they proceeded very quickly. In a few hours they came in sight of a considerable village; and as they were proceeding to call upon the chief, or Shum, they were surrounded by several of his servants, who seemed desirous to pay them every possible respect.

Bruce happened to be on a very steep part of the hill, full of bushes; and one of the Shum's servants, dressed in the Arabian fashion, in a boroose, and turban striped white and green, led his horse, to prevent his slipping, till he got into the path leading to the Shum's door; when, all of a sudden, the fellow exclaimed in Arabic, as he led the horse, "Good Lord! to see you here! Good God! to see you here!" Bruce asked him to whom he was speaking, and what reason he had to wonder to see him there. The man told him he was on board the Lion when Bruce's little vessel, all covered with sail, passed with such briskness through the English ships, which all fired their cannon; "and," said the man, "everybody said, there is a poor man making a great haste to be assassinated among those wild people in Habbesh; and so we all thought." He concluded, "Drink! no force! Englishman, very good! G—d damn, drink!" monosyllables which we invariably manage to sow in every part of the globe that we visit, leaving them behind us as odd specimens of our language, and equally curious relics of our religion.

As soon as the horses were fed, Bruce would stay

no longer, but mounted his horse to proceed to the cataract. They first came to the bridge, which consists of one arch, of about twenty-five feet broad, the extremities of which were strongly let into and rested on the solid rock on both sides. The Nile here is confined between two rocks, and runs in a deep ravine with great roaring and impetuous velocity. They were obliged to remount the stream above half a mile, before they came to the cataract, through trees and bushes of most beautiful and delightful appearance.

“The cataract itself,” says Bruce, “was the most magnificent sight that ever I beheld. The height has been rather exaggerated. The missionaries say, the fall is about sixteen ells, or fifty feet. The measuring is, indeed, very difficult; but, by the position of long sticks, and poles of different lengths, at different heights of the rock, from the water’s edge, I may venture to say, that it is nearer forty feet than any other measure. The river had been considerably increased by rains, and fell in one sheet of water, without any interval, above half an English mile in breadth, with a force and noise that was truly terrible, and which stunned, and made me, for a time, perfectly dizzy. A thick fume, or haze, covered the fall all round, and hung over the course of the stream both above and below, marking its track, though the water was not seen. The river, though swelled with rain, preserved its natural clearness, and fell, as far as I could discern, into a deep pool, or basin, in the solid rock. It was a magnificent sight, that ages, added to the greatest length of human life, would not efface or eradicate from my memory; it struck me with a kind of stupor, and a total oblivion of where I was, and of every other sublunary concern. It was one of the most magnificent, stupendous sights in the creation.

“ I measured the fall, and believe, within a few feet, it was the height I have mentioned ; but I confess I could at no time in my life less promise upon precision ; my reflection was suspended or subdued ; and, while in sight of the fall, I think I was under a temporary alienation of mind ; it seemed to me as if one element had broke loose from, and become superior to, all laws of subordination ; that the fountains of the great deep were again extraordinarily opened, and the destruction of a world was once more begun by the agency of water.”

From the cataract Bruce returned to the house of his Moorish friend Negade Ras Mahomet, and on the 22nd of May he resumed his journey to join the king. After passing a number of hills covered with trees and shrubs of indescribable beauty, and extraordinary fragrance, he descended towards the passage of the Nile. Here he experienced the use of Mahomet's servants, three of whom, each with a lance in one hand, holding that of his companion in the other, waded across the violent stream, sounding with the end of their lances every step they took.

“ From the passage to Tsoomwa,” says Bruce, “ all the country was forsaken, the grass trodden down, and the fields without cattle. Everything that had life and strength fled before that terrible leader (Ras Michael) and his no less terrible army : a profound silence was in the fields around us, but no marks yet of desolation.” After travelling two days under a very hot sun, they came to a plain flat country, which, by the constant rains that now fell, began to stand in large pools, and threatened to turn all into a lake.

“ We had hitherto,” says Bruce, “ lost none of the beasts of carriage, but now were so impeded by streams, brooks, and quagmires, that we despaired of ever bringing one of them to join the camp. The

horses, and beasts of burden that carried the baggage of the army, and which had passed before us, had spoiled every ford, and we saw to-day a number of dead mules lying about the fields, the houses all reduced to ruins, and smoking like so many kilns: even the grass, or wild oats, which were grown very high, were burnt in large plots of a hundred acres together; everything bore the marks that Ras Michael was gone before, whilst not a living creature appeared in those extensive, fruitful, and once well-inhabited plains. An awful silence reigned everywhere around, interrupted only at times by thunder, now become daily, and the rolling of torrents, produced by local showers in the hills, which ceased with the rain, and were but the children of an hour. Amidst this universal silence that prevailed all over this scene of extensive desolation, I could not help remembering how finely Mr. Gray paints the passage of such an army, under a leader like Ras Michael:—

Confusion in his van with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind."

As they advanced, they passed a great number of dead mules and horses; "and the hyænas," says Bruce, "were so bold as only to leave the carcass for a moment, and snarl, as if they regretted to see any of us pass alive."

"Since passing the Nile," continues Bruce, "I found myself more than ordinarily depressed; my spirits were sunk almost to a degree of despondency, and yet nothing had happened since that period, more than what was expected before. This disagreeable situation of mind continued at night while I was in bed. The rashness and imprudence with which I had engaged myself in so many dangers, without any necessity for so doing; the little prospect of my being ever able to extricate myself out of them, or, even, if I lost my

life, of the account being conveyed to my friends at home; the great and unreasonable presumption which had led me to think that, after every one that had attempted this voyage had miscarried in it, I was the only person that was to succeed; all these reflections upon my mind, when relaxed, dozing, and half oppressed with sleep, filled my imagination with what I have heard other people call the *horrors*, the most disagreeable sensation I ever was conscious of, and which I then felt for the first time. Impatient of suffering any longer, I leaped out of bed, and went to the door of the tent, where the outward air perfectly awakened me, and restored my strength and courage. All was still, and at a distance I saw several bright fires, but lower down, and more to the right than I expected, which made me think I was mistaken in the situation of Karcagna. It was then near four in the morning of the 25th. I called up my companions, happily buried in deep sleep, as I was desirous, if possible, to join the king that day."

If the reader will but recal to mind the picture of Bruce's personal appearance on his arrival at Jidda on the Red Sea—how much he was then shaken by the great fatigue he had even at that period undergone—and will then reflect on the wear and tear of constitution which Bruce had since suffered, he will comprehend, better than Bruce himself seems to have done, why his spirit now began to fail him, and why life, like an exhausted taper, burnt dimly in the socket.

Bruce and his party were three or four miles from Derdera when the sun rose: there had been little rain that night, and they found very few torrents in their way; but it was slippery and uneasy walking, the rich soil being trodden into mire. About seven o'clock they entered the broad plain of Maitsha, leaving the lake behind them. Here great part of

the country was in tillage, and had been, apparently, covered with plentiful crops; but all was cut down by the army for their horses, or trodden under foot, from carelessness or vengeance: so that a green blade could scarcely be met with. They saw a number of people this day, chiefly straggling soldiers, who, in parties of threes and fours, had been seeking, in all the bushes and concealed parts of the river, for the miserable natives who had hidden themselves therein; in this dreadful occupation, many had been successful. Some of them had three, some four women, boys, and girls, whom, though Christians like themselves, they were hurrying along, to sell to the Turks for a very small price.

A little before nine Bruce heard the report of a gun, which gave all his party joy, as they supposed the army not to be far off: a few minutes after, they heard several dropping shots, and, in less than a quarter of an hour's time, a general firing began from right to left, which ceased for an instant, and then was heard again as smart as ever.

Thinking that the army was beaten and retreating, Bruce and his party mounted their horses to join it. Still, however, it appeared to them scarcely possible that Fasil should beat Ras Michael so easily, and with so short a resistance.

They had not gone far in the plain, before, to their very great surprise and delight, they had a sight of the enemy. A multitude of deer, buffaloes, boars, and various other wild beasts, alarmed by the noise and the advance of the army, had been gradually driven before them.

The whole country was overgrown with wild oats, a great many of the villages having been burnt the year before; and in this shelter the wild beasts had taken up their abodes in very great numbers. When

the army pointed towards Karcagna to the left, the silence and solitude on the opposite side made them turn to the right, to where the Nile makes a very large semicircle, the Jemma being behind them, and much overflowed. When the army, therefore, instead of marching south and by east towards Samseen, had turned the course north-west, they fell in with these innumerable herds of deer and other beasts, who, confined between the Nile, the Jemma, and the lake, had no way to return but as they had come. These animals, therefore, finding men in every direction in which they attempted to pass, became desperate, and not knowing what course to take, they at last fell a prey to the troops. The soldiers, happy at the opportunity of procuring animal food, soon fell to firing wherever the beasts appeared; every loaded gun was discharged upon them, and this continued for very near an hour. A numerous flock of the largest deer, called bohur, met Bruce and his party, at full speed, and apparently attempted to run them down; some forced themselves through, while others escaped across the plain.

The king and Ras Michael were in a most violent agitation of mind, for though the cause of the firing was before their eyes, yet it was instantly reported that Woodage Asahel had attacked the army; and this occasioned a general panic and disorder, everybody being convinced that he was not far off. The firing, however, continued; the balls flew about in every direction; some few were killed, and many people and horses were hurt: still they fired, while Ras Michael stood at the door of his tent, crying, threatening, and tearing his grey locks, at finding that the army was not under his command. The king, however, now ordered his tent to be pitched, his standard to be set up, his drums to beat (the signal

for encamping), and the firing then immediately ceased. But it was a long while before all the army could believe that Woodage Asahel had not been engaged with some part of it that day. Fortunately he was not able to lay hold of this favourable opportunity; for if, at that moment, he had attacked Michael on the Samseen side, with five hundred horse, the whole army would probably have fled without resistance, and would have been entirely dispersed.

Bruce was making his way towards the king's tent, when he was met by a servant of confidence of Kefla Yasous, who had that day commanded the rear in the retreat; an experienced officer, brave even to a fault, but full of mildness and humanity, and one of the most sensible and affable men in the army. He sent to desire that Bruce would come to him alone. This he promised to do; but he first wished to search for Strates and Sebastos, who had been sick upon the road.

Bruce soon came up with them, and was exceedingly surprised to see them both lying extended on the ground; Strates bleeding at a large wound in his forehead, moaning in Greek to himself, and exclaiming that he had broken his leg, which he pressed with both his hands below the knee, apparently regardless of the gash in his head, which seemed to be a very serious one. Sebastos was also lying stretched along the ground, scarcely saying anything, but sighing very piteously.—Bruce asked him whether his arm was broken? he answered feebly, that he was dying, and that his legs, arms, and ribs, were all broken to pieces. The bystanders, meanwhile, were bursting into occasional fits of laughter.

Ali, Mahomet's servant, the only person who appeared concerned, said that it was all owing to prince George, who had frightened their mules.

This prince was fond of horsemanship ; he rode with saddle, bridle, and stirrups, like an Arab ; and, though young, was become an excellent horseman, superior to any in Abyssinia. The manner in which two Arabs salute one another, when they meet, is this :—the person inferior in rank or age, presents his gun at the other, about five hundred yards' distance, charged with powder only ; he then, keeping his gun always presented, gallops up, then lowers the muzzle of his gun, and fires just under his friend's stirrups, or the horse's belly. This the Arabs do, sometimes twenty at a time ; and one would often think it was impossible they could escape being bruised or burnt. The prince had learned this exercise from Bruce, and was as delighted as he was perfect at it. Bruce had procured him a short gun, with a lock and flint instead of a match, and he shot not only justly but gracefully on horseback. He had been hunting the deer all the morning ; and hearing that his friend Bruce had arrived, and seeing the two Greeks riding on their mules, he came galloping furiously with his gun presented, and not seeing Bruce, fired a shot under the belly of Strates's mule, and then turning like lightning to the left, he was out of sight in a moment.

Never was a compliment less relished or understood. Strates had a couple of panniers upon his mule, containing two great earthen jars of hydromel ; Sebastos, the king's cook, had also sundry jars and pots, besides three or four dozen drinking glasses ; a carpet almost covered the animals and the panniers ; and upon the pack-saddles, between these panniers, did Strates and Sebastos ride. The mules, as well as the burden, belonged to the king, and the men were only permitted to ride because they were a little sick. Strates went first, and, to save trouble, the halter of Sebastos's mule was tied to Strates's

saddle, so the mules were fastened to, and followed, one another. As soon as the explosion took place, Strates's mule, not accustomed to noisy compliments of this kind, started, turned about, and threw his rider to the ground; the animal then trampled upon him, began to run off, and winding the halter around Sebastos behind, dragged him also along the ground among some stones. Both the mules then began kicking at each other, or rather at each other's panniers and pack-saddles, until they broke everything that was in them. The mischief did not end here; for, in running away, they came like a bar-shot against the mule of Azage Tecla Haimanout, one of the king's criminal judges, a very feeble old man, who found himself suddenly thrown upon the ground, with an ankle broken, so that he could not walk alone for several months afterwards. As soon as a tent was pitched for the wounded, and when Bruce had dressed Tecla Haimanout's foot, he went to the tent of Kefla Yasous, who instantly rose up and embraced him. He then told Bruce that Ras Michael had resolved to cross the Nile immediately, to march back to Gondar, and that they had accordingly wheeled about, when they were interrupted by the firing.

On the 26th of May, 1770, Bruce marched with the army towards the Nile. About four o'clock the army reached the banks of the river. "From the time we had decamped from Cogo," says Bruce, "it poured incessantly the most violent rain we had ever seen, violent claps of thunder followed close one upon another, almost without interval, accompanied with sheets of lightning, which ran on the ground like water; the day was more than commonly dark, as in an eclipse, and every hollow or footpath collected a quantity of rain, which ran into the Nile in torrents."

The Abyssinian armies pass the Nile at all seasons, though the appearance of the river is often terrific, but the Greeks crowded round Bruce in despair, cursing the hour they had first entered the country. The first person who crossed was a young officer, a relation of the king; he walked in with great caution, marking a track for the king to pass, but his horse plunging into deep water he swam to the opposite side. The king next followed; then came the old Ras on his mule, with several of his friends, swimming both with and without their horses, on each side of him, in a manner that appeared quite wonderful. The king's troops and Bruce followed. The confusion which afterwards ensued it is impossible to describe; mules, horses, and men, stuck for some time in the muddy landing-place, and the latter screaming for help, they were at last all hurried away by the stream. Rafts were made for some of the women, but the old Ras sullenly insisted that Ozoro Esther, though she was with child, and had actually fainted several times, should cross in the same manner he had crossed himself, and those who both admired and pitied her, swam by her side. It was said that the old Ras had even been heard to declare that if she could not pass, he had resolved to murder her, lest she should fall into the hands of his enemy, Fasil.

Two days after the passage of this river, the Ras, who, although he was one of the most infirm and aged men in the army, seemed to require neither sleep nor rest, engaged Fasil, and defeated him in the battle of Limjour; in consequence of which, the following day Fasil sent to inform Michael of the manner in which the king had been betrayed by Gusho and Powussen; and, offering his submission,

added, "that he never again intended to appear in arms against the king; that he would hold his government under him, and pay his contributions regularly." Fasil was, after this submission, appointed Governor of Damot and Maitsha.

"Late in the evening," says Bruce, "Ozoro Esther came to the king's tent. She had been ill, and alarmed, as she well might, at the passage of the Nile, which had given her a more delicate look than ordinary; she was dressed all in white, and I thought I seldom had seen so handsome a woman. The king had sent ten oxen to old Ras Michael, but he had given twenty to Ozoro Esther; and it was to thank him for this extraordinary mark of favour that she had come to visit him in his tent. I had for some time past, indeed, thought they were not insensible to the merit of each other. Upon her thanking the young king for the distinction he had shown her, 'Madam,' said he, 'your husband, Ras Michael, is intent upon employing, in the best way possible for my service, those of the army that are strong and vigorous; you, I am told, bestow your care on the sick and disabled, and by your attention they are restored to their former health and activity. The strong, active soldier eats the cows that I have sent to the Ras; the enfeebled and sick recover upon yours, for which reason I sent you a double portion, that you may have it in your power to do double good.' After this the room was cleared, and she had an audience alone for half an hour. I doubt very much whether Ras Michael had any share in the conversation; the king was in the very gayest humour, and went to rest about twelve. The Ras loved Ozoro Esther, but was not jealous."

Bruce had now violent threatenings of the ague,

and retired to bed full of reflections on the extraordinary events that, in a few hours, had crowded upon one another.

On the 30th of May he reached Gondar, and on the 3rd of June the army was encamped on the river below the town. "From the time we left Dingleber," says Bruce, "some one or other of the Ras's confidential friends had arrived every day. Several of the great officers of state reached us at the Kemona; many others met us at Abba Samuel. I did not perceive the news they brought increased the spirits either of the king or the Ras: the soldiers, however, were all contented, because they were at home; but the officers, who saw farther, wore very different countenances, especially those that were of Amhara. I, in particular, had very little reason to be pleased; for, after having undergone a constant series of fatigues, dangers, and expenses, I was returned to Gondar, disappointed of my views in arriving at the source of the Nile, without any other acquisition than a violent ague. The place where that river rises remained still as great a secret as it had been ever since the catastrophe of Phaëton:—

Nilus in extremum fugit perterritus orbem,
Occulitque caput, quod adhuc latet.

OVID, *Metam.* lib. ii."

The king had heard that Gusho and Powussen, and all the troops of Belessen and Lasta, were ready to fall upon him in Gondar as soon as the rains should have so swelled the Tacazzé that the army could not retire into Tigré; and it was now thought that the king's proclamation in favour of Fasil, especially in giving him Gojam, would hasten the motion of the rebels.

"As I had never despaired," says Bruce, "some way or other, of arriving at the fountains of the Nile,

from which we were not fifty miles distant when we turned back at Karcagna, so I never neglected to improve every means that held out to me the least probability of accomplishing this end. I had been very attentive and serviceable to Fasil's servants, while in the camp. I spoke greatly of their master ; and when they went away, gave each of them a small present for himself, and a trifle also for Fasil. They had, on the other hand, been very importunate with me, as a physician, to prescribe something for a cancer on the lip, as I understood it to be, with which Welleta Yasous, Fasil's principal general, was afflicted.

“ I had been advised, by some of my medical friends, to carry along with me a preparation of hemlock, or cicuta, recommended by Dr. Stork, a physician at Vienna. A considerable quantity had been sent me from France by commission, with directions how to use it. To keep on the safe side, I prescribed small doses to Welleta Yasous ; being much more anxious to preserve myself from reproach, than warmly solicitous about the cure of my unknown patient. I gave him positive advice to avoid eating raw meat, to keep to a milk diet, and drink plentifully of whey when he used this medicine. They were overjoyed at having succeeded so well in their commission, and declared, before the king, ‘ that Fasil, their master, would be more pleased with receiving a medicine that would restore Welleta Yasous to health, than with the magnificent appointments the king's goodness had bestowed upon him.’ ‘ If it is so,’ said I, ‘ in this day of grace I will ask two favours.’ ‘ And that's a rarity,’ says the king, ‘ come, out with them. I don't believe anybody is desirous you should be refused ; I certainly am not ; only I bar one of them—you are not to relapse into

your usual despondency, and talk of going home.' 'Well, Sir,' said I, 'I obey; and that is not one of them. They are these:—You shall give me, and oblige Fasil to ratify it, the village Geesh, and the source where the Nile rises, that I may be from thence furnished with money for myself and servants; it shall stand me instead of Tangouri, near Emfras, and, in value, it is not worth so much. The second is, that when I shall see that it is in his power to carry me to Geesh, and show me those sources, Fasil shall do it upon my request, without fee or reward, and without excuse or evasion.'

“They all laughed at the easiness of the request; all declared that this was nothing, and wished to do ten times as much. The king said, ‘Tell Fasil I do give the village of Geesh, and those fountains he is so fond of, to Yagoube and his posterity for ever, never to appear under another name in the deftar, and never to be taken from him, or exchanged, either in peace or war. Do you swear this to him in the name of your master.’ Upon which they took the two fore-fingers of my right hand, and, one after the other, laid the two fore-fingers of their right hand across them, then kissed them—a form of swearing used there, at least among those that call themselves Christians. And as Azage Kyrillos, the king’s secretary and historian, was then present, the king ordered him to enter the gift in the deftar, or revenue-book, where the taxes and revenue of the king’s lands are registered. ‘I will write it,’ says the old man, ‘in letters of gold; and, poor as I am, will give him a village four times better than either Geesh or Tangouri, if he will take a wife and stay amongst us, at least till my eyes are closed.’ It will be easily guessed this rendered the conversation a cheerful one. Fasil’s servants retired, to set out the

next day, gratified to their utmost wish ; and, as soon as the king was in bed, I went to my apartment likewise."

Bruce was now legally wedded to the "coy fountains" of the Nile ; but, like the young Eastern prince, he was yet doomed to linger, till relentless time should permit him to view the real object of his affection—the sole subject of his dreams and thoughts.

Very different notions, however, were occupying Michael and his officers. They were afraid to trust Fasil, and, besides, he could do them no service ; the rain was set in, and he was gone home : the western part of the kingdom was ready to rise against the Ras ; Woggora, to the north, immediately in Fasil's way, was in arms, and impatient to revenge the severities they had suffered when Michael first marched to Gondar ; and the next morning the whole army was in motion.

Bruce had a short interview with the king. He frankly told him that he was weak in health, and quite unprepared to attend him in Tigré ; that his heart was bent on completing the only object which had brought him into Abyssinia ; and that, should he be disappointed in effecting that object, he could only return to his country in disgrace. The young king appeared affected by Bruce's statement, and, with great kindness, desired him to remain for the present with the Iteghe at Koscam.

Ras Michael, having in vain urged certain brutal measures of violence on the king, now retired, in considerable disgust, into his own province, Tigré ; on the 10th of June, Gusho and Powussen entered Gondar ; and, for several months, the capital, as well as the country, of Abyssinia, was convulsed with a series of petty disturbances.

CHAPTER XIII.

Bruce again attempts to reach the Fountains of the Nile, and succeeds.

ALTHOUGH the Iteghe showed great aversion to Bruce's design of exploring the source of the Nile, in times of such trouble and commotion, yet she did not positively forbid the attempt ; and therefore, on the 28th of October, 1770, he and his party commenced the undertaking. Bruce's quadrant required four men, relieving each other, to carry it, and his timekeeper and telescopes employed two men more. However, his difficulties were now all in his own cause ; he had no longer to place himself in danger, to be an unwilling spectator of the quarrels and jarring interests of others ; his own great object was now before him, and he had long determined to attain it, or to perish in the attempt.

After passing a number of torrents, which were all rushing through the flat country of Dembea towards the great lake Tzana, they came to Gorgora, an elevated peninsula, running into the lake for several miles. This is one of the pleasantest situations in Abyssinia. The eye passes rapidly over the expansive lake, through which run the waters of the Nile ; it then views with pleasure the flat, rich countries of Dembea, Gojam, and Maitsha ; the high hills of Begemder and Woggora close the prospect. It was this healthy, beautiful situation which was chosen by Peter Paez for the site of a most magnificent church and monastery.

On reaching the borders of the lake on the 30th, neither the fear of crocodiles nor of hippopotami could prevent Bruce from swimming in it for some minutes ; although the sun was exceedingly hot, the water was intensely cold, owing to the streams which came into it from the mountains.

Proceeding on their journey they now met multitudes of peasants, flying before Fasil's army, which he had lately, for some unknown purpose, suddenly put in motion. Fasil was at Bamba, a collection of small villages, placed in a valley, and as Bruce knew it was in this chieftain's power to forward him to his object, thither he anxiously repaired. The following day he received a message to attend ; and his interview with this great rebel he thus describes :—

“After announcing myself, I waited about a quarter of an hour before I was admitted. Fasil was sitting upon a cushion, with a lion's skin upon it, and another, stretched like a carpet, before his feet. He had a cotton cloth, something like a dirty towel, wrapped about his head ; his upper cloak, or garment, was drawn tight about him over his neck and shoulders, so as to cover his hands. I bowed, and went forward to kiss one of them, but it was so entangled in the cloth that I was obliged to kiss the cloth instead of the hand. This was done, either as not expecting I should pay him that compliment, (as I certainly should not have done, being one of the king's servants, if the king had been at Gondar,) or else it was intended for a mark of disrespect, which was very much of a piece with the rest of his behaviour afterwards.

“There was no carpet or cushions in the tent, and only a little straw, as if accidentally, thrown thinly about it. I sat down upon the ground, thinking him sick, not knowing what all this meant. He

looked steadfastly at me, saying, half under his breath, 'Endet nawi? bogo nawi?' which, in Amharic is, 'How do you do? are you very well?' I made the usual answer, 'Well, thank God.' He again stopped, as for me to speak. There was only one old man present, who was sitting on the floor, mending a mule's bridle. I took him at first for an attendant, but, observing that a servant, uncovered, held a candle to him, I thought he was one of his Galla; but then I saw a blue silk thread, which he had about his neck, which is a badge of Christianity all over Abyssinia, and which a Galla would not wear. What he was, I could not make out: he seemed, however, to be a very bad cobbler, and took no notice of us.

" 'I am come,' said I, 'by your invitation, and the king's leave, to pay my respects to you in your own government, begging that you would favour my curiosity so far as to allow me to see the country of the Agows, and the source of the Abay (or Nile), part of which I have seen in Egypt.' 'The source of the Abay!' exclaimed he, with a pretended surprise, 'do you know what you are saying? Why, it is God knows where, in the country of the Galla, wild, terrible people. The source of the Abay! are you raving?' repeats he again: 'are you to get there, do you think, in a twelvemonth, or more, or when?' 'Sir,' said I, 'the king told me it was near Sacala, and still nearer Geesh; both villages of the Agows, and both in your government.' 'And so you know Sacala and Geesh?' says he, whistling and half angry. 'I can repeat the names that I hear,' said I; 'all Abyssinia knows the head of the Nile.' 'Ay,' says he, imitating my voice and manner, 'but all Abyssinia won't carry you there, that I promise you.' 'If you are resolved to the

contrary,' said I, 'they will not: I wish you had told the king so in time, then I should not have attempted it; it was relying upon you alone I came so far—confident, if all the rest of Abyssinia could not protect me there, that your word singly could do it.'

"He now put on a look of more complacency. 'Look you, Yagoube,' says he, 'it is true I can do it; and, for the king's sake, who recommended it to me, I would do it; but the chief priest, Abba Salama, has sent to me, to desire me not to let you pass further; he says it is against the law of the land to permit Franks, like you, to go about the country, and that he has dreamed something ill will befall me, if you go into Maitsha.' I was as much irritated as I thought it possible for me to be. 'So, so,' said I, 'the time of priests, prophets, and dreamers, is coming on again.' 'I understand you,' says he, laughing for the first time; 'I care as little for priests as Michael does, and for prophets too, but I would have you consider the men of this country are not like yours; a boy of these Galla would think nothing of killing a man of your country. You white people are all effeminate; you are like so many women; you are not fit for going into a province where all is war, and inhabited by men, warriors from their cradle.'

"I saw he intended to provoke me; and he had succeeded so effectually, that I should have died, I believe, if I had not, imprudent as it was, told him my mind in reply. 'Sir,' said I, 'I have passed through many of the most barbarous nations in the world; all of them, excepting this clan of yours, have some great men among them, above using a defenceless stranger ill. But the worst and lowest individual among the most uncivilised people never treated

me as you have done to-day, under your own roof, where I have come so far for protection.' He asked, 'How?' 'You have, in the first place,' said I, 'publicly called me Frank, the most odious name in this country, and sufficient to occasion me to be stoned to death without further ceremony, by any set of men, wherever I may present myself. By Frank, you mean one of the Romish religion, to which my nation is as adverse as yours; and again, without having ever seen any of my countrymen but myself, you have discovered, from that specimen, that we are all cowards and effeminate people, like, or inferior to, your boys or women. Look you, Sir, you never heard that I gave myself out as more than an ordinary man in my own country, far less to be a pattern of what is excellent in it. I am no soldier, though I know enough of war to see yours are poor proficient in that trade. But there are soldiers, friends and countrymen of mine, who would not think it an action to vaunt of, that with five hundred men they had trampled all your naked savages into dust.' On this Fasil made a feigned laugh, and seemed rather to take my freedom amiss. It was, doubtless, a passionate and rash speech. 'As to myself,' continued I, 'unskilled in war as I am, could it be now without further consequence, let me but be armed in my own country-fashion, on horseback, as I was yesterday, I should, without thinking myself over-matched, fight the two best horsemen you shall choose from this your army of famous men, who are warriors from their cradle; and if, when the king arrives, you are not returned to your duty, and we meet again, as we did at Limjour, I will pledge myself, with his permission, to put you in mind of this promise, and leave the choice of these men in your option.' This did not make things better.

“ He repeated the word *duty* after me, and would have replied, but my nose burst out in a stream of blood; and, that instant, a servant took hold of me by the shoulder, to hurry me out of the tent. Fasil seemed to be a good deal concerned, for the blood streamed out upon my clothes. I returned, then, to my tent, and the blood was soon staunched by washing my face with cold water. I sat down to recollect myself, and the more I calmed, the more I was dissatisfied at being put off my guard; but it is impossible to conceive the provocation without having proved it. I have felt but too often how much the love of our native soil increases by our absence from it; and how jealous we are of comparisons made to the disadvantage of our countrymen by people, who, all proper allowances being made, are generally not their equals, when they would boast themselves their superiors. I will confess further, in gratification to my critics, that I was, from my infancy, of a sanguine, passionate disposition; very sensible of injuries that I had neither provoked nor deserved; but much reflection, from very early life, continual habits of suffering in long and dangerous travels, where nothing but patience would do, had, I flattered myself abundantly, subdued my natural proneness to feel offences, which common sense might teach me I could only revenge upon myself.

“ However, upon further consulting my own breast, I found there was another cause that had co-operated strongly with the former in making me lose my temper at this time, which, upon much greater provocation, I had never done before. I found now, as I thought, that it was decreed, decisively, my hopes of arriving at the source of the Nile were for ever ended; all my trouble, all my expenses, all my time, and all my sufferings for so many years, were

thrown away, from no greater obstacle than the whimsies of one barbarian, whose good inclinations I thought I had long before sufficiently secured; and, what was worse, I was now got within less than forty miles of the place I so much wished to see; and my hopes were shipwrecked upon the last, as well as the most unexpected, difficulty I had to encounter."

Any liberal foreigner would surely have expected that these apologies would have been more than sufficient to have appeased at least Bruce's countrymen, for the error he committed in having lost his temper, when stopped by Fasil in his journey to the sources of the Nile. Yet some of Bruce's implacable enemies have not only declared that his conversation with Fasil is unnatural, and ought not, therefore, to be believed, but have even thought it necessary to support this accusation, by denying that his nose *could* have "streamed with blood" merely from anger.

With respect to the conversation, the only part of it which seems at all extraordinary, is, that Bruce having from passion acted wrong, frankly acknowledged his error, which people (particularly narrow-minded people) certainly, in general, are not apt to do. With respect to the ridiculous objection about his nose, it need only be observed, that in crossing high mountains, we have often observed even a mule's nose to bleed; and it is, therefore, very hard upon Bruce's nose to judge of it by common English rules, when, nearly two miles above the level of the sea, it was thus ploughing its course across the lofty mountains of Abyssinia. We know that elevation may be roughly estimated by the degree of heat at which water boils. The nose is in like manner a man's travelling barometer, and Bruce's anecdote particularly proves the height of the promontory on which he stood.

Bruce, leaving Fasil, retired to his tent, where he shortly received from him two lean sheep, and a guard of men to protect him during the night. In the morning, twelve horses saddled and bridled were brought to him by Fasil's servant, who asked him which he would ride. Bruce left the man to select for him a quiet horse, and forthwith mounted the one which was offered to him.

“For the first two minutes after I mounted,” says Bruce, “I do not know whether I was most in the earth or in the air; he kicked behind, reared before, leaped like a deer, all four off the ground, and it was some time before I recollected myself; he then attempted to gallop, taking the bridle in his teeth, but got a check which staggered him; he, however, continued to gallop, and, finding I slacked the bridle on his neck, and that he was at ease, he set off and ran away as hard as he could, flinging out behind every ten yards; the ground was very favourable, smooth, soft, and up-hill. I then, between two hills, half up the one and half up the other, wrought him so that he had no longer either breath or strength, and I began to think he would scarce carry me to the camp.

“The poor beast made a sad figure, cut in the sides to pieces, and bleeding at the jaws; and the seis, the rascal that put me upon him, being there when I dismounted, held up his hands upon seeing the horse so mangled, and began to testify great surprise upon the supposed harm I had done. I took no notice of this, only said, ‘Carry that horse to your master; he may venture to ride him now, which is more than either he or you dared to have done in the morning.’”

Bruce then mounted his own horse, and took with him his double-barrelled gun. The Galla were encamped close to him, and anxious to raise himself in

the estimation of these wild people, by those sort of feats which they most admire, he galloped about, twisting and turning his horse in every direction. A vast number of kites were following the camp, living upon the carrion; choosing two which were gliding near him, he shot first one on the right, then one on the left; a great shout immediately followed from the spectators, to which Bruce seemingly paid no attention, pretending absolute indifference, as if nothing extraordinary had been done.

Fasil was at the door of the tent, and, having seen the shots and horsemanship, ordered the kites immediately to be brought to him; his servants had laboured in vain to find the hole where the ball, with which Bruce must needs have killed the birds, had entered; for none of them had ever seen small-shot, and he took care not to undeceive them. Bruce had no sooner entered his tent than he asked him, with great earnestness, to show him where the ball had gone through. Before this difficulty could be solved, Fasil, perceiving the quantity of blood upon Bruce's trowsers, held up his hands, with a show of horror and concern which plainly was not counterfeited: he protested, by every oath he could devise, that he knew nothing about the matter, and was asleep at the time; that he had no horses with him worth Bruce's acceptance, except the one that he rode, but that any horse known to be his, driven before the traveller, would be a passport, and procure him respect among all the wild people whom he might meet, and for that reason only he had thought of giving him a horse. He repeated his protestations that he was innocent, and heartily sorry for the accident, which, indeed, he appeared to be: adding, that the groom was in irons, and that, before many hours passed, he would put him to death. "Sir,"

said Bruce, "as this man has attempted my life, according to the laws of the country, it is I that should name the punishment." "It is very true," replied Fasil, "take him, Yagoube, and cut him in a thousand pieces, if you please, and give his body to the kites." "Are you really sincere in what you say," said I, "and will you have no after excuses?" He swore solemnly he would not. "Then," said I, "I am a Christian: the way my religion teaches me to punish my enemies is by doing good for evil; and, therefore, I keep you to the oath you have sworn, and desire you to set the man at liberty, and put him in the place he held before, for he has not been undutiful to you."

Every one present seemed pleased with these sentiments; one of the attendants could not contain himself, but turning to Fasil, said, "Did not I tell you what my brother thought about this man? He was just the same all through Tigré." Fasil, in a low voice, very justly replied, "A man that behaves as he does may go through any country!"

In an interview which Bruce afterwards had with Fasil, he made him some handsome presents, for which he appeared to be exceedingly grateful. "I have nothing to return you for the present you have given me," said Fasil, "for I did not expect to meet a man like you here in the fields; but you will quickly be back; we shall meet on better terms at Gondar; the head of the Nile is near at hand; a horseman, express, will arrive there in a day. I have given you a good man, well known in this country to be my servant; he will go to Geesh with you, and return you to a friend of Ayto Aylo's and mine, Shalaka Welled Amlac; he has the dangerous part of the country wholly in his hands, and will carry you safe to Gondar; my wife is at present in

his house: fear nothing, I shall answer for your safety. When will you set out? to-morrow?"

Bruce replied, with many thanks for his kindness, "that he wished to proceed immediately, and that his servants were already far on the way."

"You are very much in the right," says Fasil; "it was only in the idea that you were hurt with that accursed horse that I would have wished you to stay till to-morrow; but throw off these bloody clothes; they are not decent; I must give you new ones; you are my vassal. The king has granted you Geesh, where you are going, and I must invest you." A number of his servants hurried Bruce out, and he was brought back in a few minutes to Fasil's tent, with a fine loose muslin under-garment or cloth round him, which reached to his feet. On his coming back to the tent, Fasil took off the one that he had put on himself new in the morning, and placed it on Bruce's shoulders with his own hand, (his servants throwing another immediately over him,) saying at the same time to the people, "Bear witness, I give to you, Yagoube, the Agow Geesh, as fully and freely as the king has given it me." Bruce bowed and kissed his hand, as is customary for feudatories, and he then pointed to him to sit down.

"Hear what I say to you," continued Fasil; "I think it right for you to make the best of your way now; for you will be the sooner back at Gondar. You need not be alarmed at the wild people you speak of, who are going after you, though it is better to meet them coming this way, than when they are going to their homes; they are commanded by Welleta Yasous, who is your friend, and is very grateful for the medicines you sent him from Gondar: he has not been able to see you, being so much

busied with those wild people; but he loves you and will take care of you, and you must give me more of that physic when we meet at Gondar." Bruce again bowed, and he continued—"Hear me what I say; you see those seven people (I never saw, says Bruce, more thief-like fellows in my life); these are all leaders and chiefs of the Galla—savages, if you please; they are all your brethren. You may go through their country as if it were your own, without a man hurting you: you will be soon related to them all; for it is their custom that a stranger of distinction, like you, when he is their guest, sleeps with the sister, daughter, or near relation of the principal men among them. "I dare say," added he, archly, "you will not think the customs of the Galla contain greater hardships than those of Amhara." Bruce dutifully bowed. Fasil then jabbered something to them in Galla. They all answered by a wild scream or howl; then struck themselves upon the breast, as a mark of assent, and attempted to kiss Bruce's hand. "Now," continued Fasil, "before all these men, ask me anything you have at heart, and, be it what may, they know I cannot deny it you."

Bruce, of course, asked to be conducted immediately to the head of the Nile. Fasil then turned again to his seven chiefs, who got up: they all stood round in a circle, and raised the palm of their hands, while he and his Galla together repeated, with great apparent devotion, a prayer about a minute long. "Now," says Fasil, "go in peace, you are a Galla; this is a curse upon them, and their children, their corn, grass, and cattle, if ever they lift their hand against you, or yours, or do not defend you to the utmost if attacked by others, or endeavour to defeat any design they may hear is intended against you."

Upon this Bruce offered to kiss his hand, and they all went to the door of the tent, where there stood a very handsome grey horse, bridled and saddled. "Take this horse," says Fasil, "as a present from me; but do not mount it yourself, drive it before you, saddled and bridled as it is; no man of Maitsha will touch you when he sees that horse." Bruce then took leave of Fasil, and having, according to the custom of the country towards superiors, asked permission to mount on horseback before him, was speedily out of sight.

On the 31st of October, Bruce and his little party once more set out in search of the source of the Nile; Fasil's horse being driven before them—a magician to lead them towards their object—an Ægis to shield them on their way.

After travelling till one o'clock in the morning, they reached a small village, near that dangerous ford on the Nile which, with the king's army, Bruce had before passed with so much difficulty. They there found some of the Galla, commanded by a robber called the Jumper. Bruce next morning waited upon this personage, who was quite naked, except a towel about his loins. When Bruce entered, this hero was at this toilet: in other words, he was rubbing melted tallow on his arms and body, and plaiting his hair with the large and small entrails of an ox, some of which hung like a necklace round his throat. Bruce paid his respects; but, overcome with the perfume of blood and carrion, escaped as soon as possible from his presence.

At the village of Maitsha, Bruce was informed that, such was the dread these people entertained of the small-pox, if it made its appearance in a village, the custom was at once to surround the house, set fire to it, and burn both it and its inhabitants.

After passing the Assar river, they entered the province of Goutto, where they found the people richer and better lodged than in the province of Maitsha. The whole country is full of large and beautiful cattle of all colours, and is finely shaded with the acacia vera, or Egyptian thorn, the tree which, in the sultry parts of Africa, produces the gum-arabic. Beneath these trees were growing wild oats, of such a prodigious height and size, that they are capable of concealing both a horse and his rider: some of the stalks were little less than an inch in circumference, and they have, when ripe, the appearance of small canes.

The soil is a fine, black, garden mould; and Bruce supposes that the oat is here in its original state, and that it is degenerated with us.

With these magnificent oats before him, Bruce could not resist cooking some oat cakes, after the fashion of Scotland; but his companions, regarding such dainties with all the disdain of a Dr. Johnson, sighed; and as the oatmeal in dust flew from their mouths, they voted that the composition "was bitter—that it burnt their stomachs, and made them thirsty."

Though the Galla guides paid but little attention to Bruce, yet it was curious to observe the respect they all showed to Fasil's horse. Some gave him handfuls of barley, while others, with more refined knowledge of the world, courted his favour "by respectfully addressing him."

After passing several streams, they came to the cataract, or cascade, of the Assar, which runs into the Nile. This river is about eighty yards broad, and the fall is about twenty feet. The stream covers the rock over which it is precipitated, and the whole river, in solemn magnificence, rushes with incredible violence and with force irresistible.

“The strength of vegetation,” says Bruce, “which the moisture of this river produces, supported by the action of a very warm sun, is such as one might naturally expect from theory, though we cannot help being surprised at the effects when we see them before us; trees and shrubs covered with flowers of every colour, all new and extraordinary in their shapes, crowded with birds of many uncouth forms, all of them richly adorned with variety of plumage, and seeming to fix their residence upon the banks of this river, without a desire of wandering to any distance in the neighbouring fields. But as there is nothing, though ever so beautiful, that has not some defect or imperfection, among all these feathered beauties there is not one songster; and, unless of the rose or jasmine kind, none of their flowers have any smell; we hear, indeed, many squalling, noisy birds of the jay kind, and we find two varieties of wild roses, white and yellow, to which I may add jasmine (called *Leham*), which becomes a large tree; but all the rest may be considered as liable to the general observation, that the flowers are destitute of odour, and the birds of song.”

After passing the Assar, and several villages belonging to Goutto, Bruce, on the 2nd of November, 1770, for the first time, obtained a distinct view of the mountain of Geesh, the long-wished-for object of his most dangerous and troublesome journey; and now, in sight of his goal, he bent firmly forwards, and proceeded with redoubled strength and determination.

The Nile was before him, and he now joyfully descended to its banks, which were ornamented on the west with high trees of the salix or willow tribe, while on the east appeared “black, dark, and thick groves, with craggy, pointed rocks, and overshadowed

with old, tall timber trees, going to decay with age : a very rude and awful face of nature ; a cover from which fancy suggested that a lion might issue, or some animal or monster yet more savage and ferocious."

Having reached the passage, the old inhabitants, in whose hearts a veneration for their river seemed to be more firmly rooted than the more recent doctrines of Christianity, crowded to the ford, and protested against any man's riding across the stream either on a horse or mule. They insisted that Bruce and his party should take off their shoes, and they even made a sign that they would stone those who attempted to wash the dirt from their clothes or trowsers. The servants naturally returned rudeness for rudeness ; "but," says Bruce, "I sat by, exceedingly happy at having so unexpectedly found the remnants of veneration for that ancient deity still subsisting in such vigour."

The people now asked Woldo, Bruce's guide from Fasil, to pay them for carrying over the baggage and instruments. In a most violent passion the man threw away his pipe, and seizing a stick, exclaimed—"Who am I then ? a girl, a woman, a Pagan dog, like yourselves ? and who is Waragna Fasil ? are you not his slaves ? But you want payment, do you ?"—upon which he flew upon them, and beat them. Not contented with this, he then pretended that these poor people had robbed him of some money—which they consented to pay to him, fearing lest some fine or heavy chastisement should fall upon their village.

As Bruce proceeded, he had some little difficulty in obtaining meat or provisions of any sort ; for, although these poor people, with the utmost curiosity, would have flocked around him if they had known

that he was a stranger from Gondar, yet the sight of Fasil's horse drove them away, for they fancied that some contribution was to be levied upon them.

Bruce, being now within the sound of a cataract which he was desirous to visit, took the liberty of mounting Fasil's horse, and, with a single guide, he galloped about four or five miles to see it; but he was disappointed in its appearance, the river being only about sixty yards broad, and the fall only sixteen feet. On his return, he found that a cow was about to be killed for his party. Woldo had managed to discover one by bellowing through his hands, in a manner which induced the unfortunate animal to reply, and the hiding-place, in which she had been concealed by her owner, was thus detected.

Bruce now thought it proper to inform Woldo that the king had granted to him the small territory of Geesh, and that it was his intention to forgive to its poor inhabitants the taxes which they had been in the habit of paying: a sublime act, which, to Woldo's palate, savoured very much of the ridiculous; for he not only highly and conscientiously approved of taxes, but appeared to agree in opinion with the Englishman, whose little pamphlet in favour of the same subject commenced with—"It is in the nature of taxes, as it is in the nature of lead, to be heavy!" Bruce, however, insisting that the burden should be relieved, Woldo reluctantly yielded to his mandate.

The next day, the 3rd of November, they proceeded through a plain, covered with acacias. Several of the tops of these trees had been cut off, for the purpose of making baskets for bees, which were hung outside the houses, like bird-cages: numerous hives were at work, and although they took no notice of the inhabitants, yet they waged war against Bruce and his party, and stung them very severely.

After passing some hills, they descended into a large plain full of marshes. "In this plain," says Bruce, "the Nile winds more in the space of four miles than, I believe, any river in the world: it makes above a hundred turns in that distance, one of which advances so abruptly into the plain, that we concluded we must pass it, and were preparing accordingly, when we saw it make as sharp a turn to the right, and run far on in a contrary direction, as if we were never to have met it again. The Nile here is not above twenty feet broad, nor more than a foot deep.

In crossing the plain of Goutto, the sun had been intensely hot, and here it became so dreadfully oppressive, that it quite overcame them all. Even Woldo declared himself to be ill, and talked of going no farther: however, by Bruce's persuasions, they pushed towards three ranges of mountains, among which were situated the small village of Geesh, and the long-expected fountains of the Nile.

Bruce says—"This triple ridge of mountains, disposed one range behind the other, nearly in form of portions of three concentric circles, seems to suggest an idea that they are the Mountains of the Moon, or the *Montes Lunæ* of antiquity, at the foot of which the Nile was said to rise; in fact, there are no others. Amid-amid may perhaps exceed half a mile in height; they certainly do not arrive at three-quarters, and are greatly short of that fabulous height given them by Kircher. These mountains are all of them excellent soil, and everywhere covered with fine pasture; but as this unfortunate country had been for ages the seat of war, the inhabitants have only ploughed and sown the top of them, out of the reach of enemies or marching armies. On the middle of the mountain are villages built of a white sort of grass, which makes them conspicuous at a great distance; the bottom is

all grass, where their cattle feed continually under their eye; these, upon any alarm, they drive up to the top of the mountains, out of danger. The hail lies often upon the top of Amid-amid for hours, but snow was never seen in this country, nor have they a word in their language for it. It is also remarkable, though we had often violent hail at Gondar, and when the sun was vertical, it never came but with the wind blowing directly from Amid-amid."

As they proceeded the people continued to fly from their little villages, scared by the appearance of Fasil's horse. In one village they found only one earthen pot containing food, which Bruce took possession of, leaving in its place a wedge of salt, which, strange to say, is still used as small money in Gondar, and all over Abyssinia. The following day they proceeded, and although they saw no inhabitants, yet they often heard voices whispering among the trees and canes. Bruce made many endeavours to catch some of these people in order to apprise them of the real object of his visit, but "*equo ne credite Teucris!*" it was quite impossible, for they fled much faster than he could follow.

He, therefore, determined to conceal Fasil's horse, that scarecrow which created such universal alarm; but as it is considered treason at Gondar, to sit on the king's chair, or on his saddle, Woldo was for some time very anxious to maintain inviolate the dignity of his master. Bruce compromised the matter by proposing to ride upon his own saddle, and with this proviso mounted Fasil's horse.

After coasting for some little time along the side of a valley, they began to ascend a mountain, and, reaching its summit about noon, came in sight of Sacala, which joins the village of Geesh. Shortly afterwards they passed the Googueri, a stream of

about sixty feet broad, and about eighteen inches deep, very clear and rapid, running over a rugged, uneven bottom of black rock. At a quarter past twelve, they halted on a small eminence, where the market of Sacala is held every Saturday. Horned cattle, many of the highest possible beauty, with which all this country abounds, large asses, honey, butter, ensete for food, and a manufacture of the leaf of that plant, painted with different colours like mosaic-work, for mats, were here exposed for sale in great plenty.

At a quarter after one o'clock they passed the river Gometti, the boundary of the plain: they were now ascending a very steep and rugged mountain, the worst pass they had met on the whole journey. They had no other path but a road made by the sheep or the goats, which had no appearance of having been frequented by men; for it was broken, full of holes, and in other places obstructed with large stones that seemed to have been there from the creation. Besides this the whole was covered with thick wood, which often occupied the very edge of the precipices on which they stood, and they were everywhere stopped and entangled by that execrable thorn the kantuffa, and several other thorns and brambles nearly as inconvenient. Bruce ascended, however, with great alacrity, as he conceived he was surmounting the last difficulty of the many thousands he had been doomed to struggle with.

At three-quarters after one they arrived at the top of the mountain, from whence they had a distinct view of all the remaining territory of Sacala, the mountain of Geesh, and the church of St. Michael Geesh. "Immediately below us," says Bruce, "appeared the Nile itself, strangely diminished in size, and now only a brook that had scarcely water to turn

a mill. I could not satiate myself with the sight, revolving in my mind all those classical prophecies that had given the Nile up to perpetual obscurity and concealment."

Bruce was roused from this reverie by an alarm that Woldo the guide was missing. The servants could not agree when they saw him last. Strates the Greek with another of the party were in the wood shooting, but they soon appeared without Woldo. They said that they had seen some enormous shaggy apes or baboons without tails, several of which were walking upright, and they, therefore, concluded, either that these creatures had torn Woldo to pieces, or that he was lagging behind for some purpose of treachery; however, while they were thus talking, Woldo was seen approaching, pretending to be very ill, and declaring that he could go no farther. Bruce was at this moment occupied in sketching a yellow rose tree, several of which species were hanging over the river.

"The Nile," he says, "here is not four yards over, and not above four inches deep where we crossed; it was indeed become a very trifling brook, but ran swiftly over a bottom of small stones, with hard black rock appearing amongst them: it is at this place very easy to pass, and very limpid, but a little lower, full of inconsiderable falls; the ground rises gently from the river to the southward, full of small hills and eminences, which you ascend and descend almost imperceptibly. The day had been very hot for some hours, and my party were sitting in the shade of a grove of magnificent cedars, intermixed with some very large and beautiful cusso-trees, all in flower; the men were lying on the grass, and the beasts fed with their burdens on their backs in most luxuriant herbage." Above was a small ford, where

the Nile was so narrow that Bruce had stepped across it more than fifty times : it had now dwindled to the size of a common mill-stream.

When Woldo came to Bruce, he declared he was too ill to proceed, but this imposition being detected, he then confessed that he was afraid to enter Geesh, having once killed several of its inhabitants; however, Bruce gave him a very handsome sash, which he took, making many apologies. "Come, come," said Bruce, "we understand each other; no more words; it is now late; lose no more time, but carry me to Geesh, and the head of the Nile directly, without preamble, and show me the hill that separates me from it. He then carried me round to the south side of the church, out of the grove of trees that surrounded it. . . . 'This is the hill,' says he, looking archly, 'that, when you were on the other side of it, was between you and the fountains of the Nile; there is no other. Look at that hillock of green sod in the middle of that watery spot; IT IS IN THAT THE TWO FOUNTAINS OF THE NILE ARE TO BE FOUND! Geesh is on the face of the rock where yon green trees are. If you go the length of the fountains, pull off your shoes, as you did the other day, for these people are all Pagans, worse than those who were at the ford; and they believe in nothing that you believe, but only in this river, to which they pray every day as if it were God; but this perhaps you may do likewise.'"

"Half undressed as I was, by loss of my sash, and throwing my shoes off, I ran down the hill, towards the little island of green sods, which was about two hundred yards distant; the whole side of the hill was thick grown with flowers, the large bulbous roots of which appearing above the surface of the ground, and their skins coming off on treading upon them,

occasioned me two very severe falls before I reached the brink of the marsh. I after this came to the altar of green turf, which was in form of an altar, apparently the work of art, and I stood in rapture over the principal fountain, which rises in the middle of it.

“ It is easier to guess than to describe the situation of my mind at that moment—standing in that spot which had baffled the genius, industry, and inquiry of both ancients and moderns for the course of near three thousand years! Kings had attempted this discovery at the head of armies, and each expedition was distinguished from the last only by the difference of the numbers which had perished, and agreed alone in the disappointment which had uniformly and without exception followed them all. Fame, riches, and honour, had been held out for a series of ages to every individual of those myriads these princes commanded, without having produced one man capable of gratifying the curiosity of his sovereign, or wiping off this stain upon the enterprise and abilities of mankind, or adding this desideratum for the encouragement of geography. Though a mere private Briton, I triumphed here, in my own mind, over kings and their armies! and every comparison was leading nearer and nearer to presumption, when the place itself where I stood, the object of my vain-glory, suggested what depressed my short-lived triumph. I was but a few minutes arrived at the sources of the Nile, through numberless dangers and sufferings, the least of which would have overwhelmed me, but for the continual goodness and protection of Providence.—I was, however, but then half through my journey, and all those dangers which I had already passed, awaited me again on my return—I found a despondency gaining ground fast upon

me, and blasting the crown of laurels I had too rashly woven for myself."

There is nothing which stamps authenticity more strongly in Bruce's narrative than the artless simplicity with which he writes, and it is only justice to infer, that he, who so honestly expresses what he feels, must surely be equally faithful in relating what he sees; for how many more inducements have we to conceal the one fact than the other! To describe what we see is an easy and no unpleasing task; but to unbosom our feelings is almost always to expose our weakness! But Bruce has no concealments; and his thoughts and sentiments, whatever they are, are always frankly thrown before his reader. How very natural are his feelings on reaching the fountains of the Nile, and what a serious moral they offer! For a few moments he riots in the extravagance of his triumph, exulting that a Briton has done what kings and armies had been unable to perform, and yet he adds that he suddenly found himself overpowered with a melancholy which, at such a moment, may at first appear to many to be even more unnatural and incredible than any of the very singular scenes which he has described; nevertheless, as the artless child of nature, how much real cause had he for such feelings! It may sound strange to hear Bruce dreading, on his return, dangers which, in advancing, he so carelessly and daringly encountered; but he had then his object to gain—the inestimable prize was to be won—to his ardent imagination it was constantly before him, decked with ten thousand charms, and beckoning to him to advance; but when he gained the spot, he suddenly awoke from his distempered dream—the vision had vanished—nothing remained before him but "a hillock of green sod;" and then, with Byron, well might he exclaim,

The lovely toy, so keenly sought,
Has lost its charms by being caught.

The Nile was now at an end!—Bruce had no longer to fly towards its source on the light wings of expectation; but, like the bee laden with its honey, he had to carry his burden to his distant hive; and, thus encumbered, his shattered frame worn by fatigue, exhausted by a burning sun, and no longer supported by the excitement of his mind, he naturally trembled at the dangers that threatened to intercept him.

The texture of the human mind is so delicately fine, that it is often affected by causes which to the judgment are imperceptible; and although Bruce does not declare it, yet it is but too probable that his melancholy sprang mainly from the thought, how little, after all, his discovery was worth the trouble it had cost him. It had, indeed, “baffled the genius, industry, and inquiry, of both ancients and moderns, for near three thousand years,” and it was equally true that “a mere private Briton had triumphed over kings and their armies;” but, after all, did the source of the Nile really in creation rank as an object worthy of such an attention? What proportion did a narrow stream (which could have flowed through a pipe of two inches in diameter) bear to that vast rolling mass of waters which gave fertility to Egypt? Was the “hillock of green sod before him” actually the source of that immense river, or did it only nourish one insignificant member of an innumerable congregation of streams, most of which issued not from the earth, but fell, like the dew, from heaven? In short, had not human curiosity been pushed too far—had it made any other discovery than its own weakness? for if it be true that the north Etesian winds blow the Mediter-

anean clouds to burst on the mountains of Abyssinia, their waters to be again restored to that distant sea, is not the Nile like the serpent whose tail is in his mouth—an emblem of eternity? and in this great circle may it not be said, why is Geesh alone to assume importance?

Bruce, drooping, bending in despondency over the fountains of the Nile, must ever form a most striking picture, exemplifying the real practical difference which exists between moral and religious exertions; for although, among men, he had gained his prize, it may justly be asked what was it worth? The course of a river is like the history of a man's life. All of it that is useful to us is worth knowing; but the source of the one is the birth of the other, and "the hillock of green sod" is the "infant mewling and puking in its nurse's arms."

There is, however, no adversity, no disappointment in life, that does not leave behind it some serious, useful moral; and although one vessel founders and sinks, yet its masts often stand in the shoal water—beacons to warn others of its fate. While the little village of Geesh is yet before the reader, and while he joins with Bruce in feelings of "despondency," let us for one moment pause again to reflect on those theories of the present day, in support of which victim after victim is still sent, to hunt for minute objects which are, most unfortunately, of no more real sterling value than that before him. At the bottom of the sea we might, indeed, expect to find "wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearls, unvalued jewels;" but at the north pole of the earth, or in the equally lifeless deserts of Africa, what are we to find but the death which Bruce escaped, or the disappointment which he experienced? We all know that men, like bull-dogs, may be set at anything,

but is it right that their courage and determination should, for the sake of any man's theory, however ingeniously supported, be pitted against objects which are worthless, and after all too strong for them? "*Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori,*" yet the life even of the most humble citizen should be spared, unless it can gain for his nation at least its equivalent; and surely no liberal person will say that those who have lately perished in search of "the grand African problem of our day," have given information which, in a generous country, should be considered as valuable as their lives.

It must be too evident that our African travellers have lately been running in blinkers, on iron railways, to support a little contracted theory which no Englishman (or what before the world is much more discreditable to us)—no foreigner can now refuse to worship without being subjected to personal and very illiberal abuse. In obedience to this system, it has already been shown that poor Denham (like Major Laing) was persuaded to attempt to penetrate the immense continent of Africa in the ill-adapted dress of "an English country gentleman"—garments which, however deservedly they may be respected in this country, are, in Central Africa, not only totally unknown, but appear hateful, grotesque, and barbarous beyond the power of description. Again, we know that when Captain Clapperton, after the death of his worthy, unassuming, and excellent companion, Dr. Oudney, at last succeeded in reaching Saccatoo, the Sultan Bello, who evidently received him with the very greatest suspicion, "inquired (Denham, vol. ii. p. 309) if the king of England would give him a couple of guns, with ammunition and some rockets?" "I assured him," says Clapperton, "of his Majesty's compliance with his wishes, *if he would consent to*

put down the Slave Trade on the Coast!" In abruptly proposing this most singular bargain, Clapperton was only an honest sentinel at his post ; but might he not as well have asked the Sultan to abjure his religion ? for what should we say to a stranger who should arrive among us from an almost unknown country, to request that we should, in return for such a trifling present, give up slavery even in our own colonies ?

That the slavery of Africa is deplorable, no one is disposed to deny ; but even in this religious, moral, reflecting, and free country, we are told that it absolutely cannot suddenly be abolished. How, then, could it ever have been supposed that the universal system of the vast, unknown continent of Africa (a system which we have humbly endeavoured to show is produced by physical causes : namely, immense deserts and feverish regions which keep the human mind as barren and putrid as themselves) could be suddenly overturned—that such a gigantic, unheard-of moral revolution could be effected, in return for “ a couple of guns,” &c., to oblige an individual professing a detested creed—and coming from a nation which, after all, *absolutely supports slavery itself?* The African traveller has surely difficulties enough, without quixotically encountering the very greatest prejudice of the country !

But in all countries under the sun, there is, most surely, one great road which leads directly to every man's heart, namely, his own interest. And in Africa, if we would but resolve to travel on that road, “ to be a light to lighten the Gentiles,” we might then, with some reason, pride ourselves on being “ Britons and Christians.” If we were calmly to impart to these ignorant people the valuable information we possess—if we were to satisfy them that our object is really to do them good—to give them gratis the

inestimable benefits which science can bestow upon rude labour ; if we were to offer to the poor woman a wheel for her draw-well—to show people who pound their corn in a mortar, a more simple method by which they might grind it—if we would, by a common filter, sweeten for them impure water, and by a herb lull the painful disorder which it creates—if we would come forward to replace a dislocated limb—and on a much larger scale, if we would explain to these people, that, by a very simple operation immense portions of their vast country might either be irrigated or drained, and that even their climate might thus be purified—if we could show them manure lying unknown before them—in short, if on great subjects, as well as small, we were chemically and mechanically to assist them, we should undoubtedly find that the value and good qualities of a mind truly civilised would, rising to its proper level, be in Africa, as elsewhere, fully appreciated—that our fame would justly extend—and that every tribe and nation would be eager to receive us.

But on the other hand, if, instead of conferring benefits, we invade these people for narrow, selfish, and suspicious objects, the value of which, as rational beings, they cannot possibly comprehend—if we tell them that we have come from a most distant country to discover the source of their rivers—to carry away a copy of their temples, or to make mysterious notes and observations on the stars—that we want also specimens of their grubs, insects, and plants—in short, that we seek.

Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
 Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
 Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
 Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,
 For a charm of powerful trouble—

what can we justly expect but the persecution which the search of these objects actually brought upon its devotees even in England, in the century of "Demonology and Witchcraft" which has so lately ended?

But if, going far beyond all this, we are to give positive, as well as negative, grounds of offence—if *our* political travellers, entering a capital dressed in gaiters, and round hats, are to cry, "Down with slavery!" and *our* missionaries, in sable garments, are equally prematurely to exclaim, "Down with your religion!" may it not fairly be asked, does our non-intercourse with the Africans proceed from their prejudiced and uncivilised conduct—or our own?

Those who seem still determined to support such desperate theories ought surely to be desired, like Bruce, to go themselves, for certainly nothing can be more ominous, or smell more rankly of theory, than a few individuals encountering danger by deputy, and shrinking from the execution of a project which each of them so eloquently recommends. Traveller after traveller in Africa, jaded, worn out, and exhausted, yet still leaning against his collar, nobly pushes forward, until Death sends to inform us that he can do no more.

Et Tartuffe ? Et Tartuffe ! il se porte à merveille !
Gros et gras, le teint frais, et la bouche vermeille.

Whether joint-stock companies make money or lose it, matters but little; but when theorists and speculators meddle, trifle with, misdirect and expend the lives of such useful men as Tuckey, Hawkey, Eyre, Ritchie, Oudney, Denham, Clapperton, Pearce, Laing, &c. &c. &c., the subject becomes one of very serious consideration.

Caillié, a Frenchman, has at last succeeded in not only reaching Timbuctoo, but surviving to describe

it; and his account of this capital, which was one of "the grand problems of the day," not only most forcibly reminds us of the "hillock of green sod," but, when compared with the sad fate of those who have perished in search of it, fills us with those very "feelings of despondency," which Bruce has so artlessly described.

"I looked around," says Caillié, "and found that the sight before me did not answer my expectations. I had formed a totally different idea of the grandeur and wealth of Timbuctoo. The city presented, at first view, nothing but a mass of ill-looking houses, built of earth. Nothing was to be seen in all directions but immense plains of quicksand of a yellowish white colour. The sky was a pale red as far as the horizon: all nature wore a dreary aspect, and the most profound silence prevailed; not even the warbling of a bird was to be heard." "This mysterious city, which has been an object of curiosity for so many ages, and of whose population, civilisation, and trade with the Soudan, such exaggerated notions have prevailed, *is situated in an immense plain of white sand, having no vegetation, but stunted trees and shrubs, such as the mimosa ferruginea, which grows no higher than three or four feet.*"

Such then is Timbuctoo! and can any one read the above description of it without acknowledging

'Tis time to sheathe the sword and spare mankind!

But after all, after the death of travellers whose memory we cannot but respect, and with whose sufferings and hardships we must surely all have sympathised, is it not an insult to the noble profession to which they belonged, and to the service in which they expired, that "discovery," as it is termed,

should now be officially committed to an individual, who (although he may be an excellent, worthy, faithful man) is nevertheless only known to the world as having been—Clapperton's valet!

And is it then come to this? In England are there no gentlemen left? No enterprising men of birth, science, and education, to whom the country can apply? Among those groups of our half-pay officers, who stand muffled in their thread-bare cloaks asking only for "employment," are there not hundreds who would be willing, *on a proper service*, to encounter danger? On the Continent shall it be said, that our naval, diplomatic, and military services are invariably directed by men of honour and distinction, but that in the cause of science and discovery we send our menials? Is it not an insult to foreign travellers to ask them to live and communicate with individuals with whom we ourselves would decline to associate? Are they fit members for their honourable club?

To an inquisitive African sultan, in whose barbarous opinion a servant is a slave, is it a proper compliment to send a person that HE most surely cannot look upon without contempt? But this is not all: how can we expect, generally speaking, that men who have passed their lives in servile dependence can possibly possess that steady independence of mind without which a traveller is indeed but the "servant" of him who sends him—viewing every thing with his master's eyes—supporting *his* theory, whatever that may be—and, like the Persian ambassador, declaring wherever he goes, that he is the distinguished favourite of some "Cousin germain du soleil et oncle de la lune!"

If ever a man's mind requires the support and assistance of a liberal education, it is surely in judg-

ing correctly of unknown countries ; for the idolatrous attention he may receive in one place, the indescribable insults to which he may be exposed in another, the amusements which in some places may await him, and the hunger, thirst, and fatigue, which in other spots may afflict him, all tend to injure the impartiality of his judgment. It is hard to think well of the land in which one has been spit upon and reviled—it is difficult to think ill of the country in which one has been richly fed ; and besides the head thus taking offence at any neglect which has been offered to the stomach, how often even does the heart shed a fictitious halo round a spot which possesses any object of its attraction ?

Under such circumstances, not only to preserve equanimity, but, until the whole country has been seen, to suspend the judgment which we all know is ever eager to rush to a hasty conclusion, and to pronounce its petty verdict before the evidence is concluded, must surely be no easy task ; and yet it is to perform this task that we are now it seems to send our servants !

If a servant happen to be shipwrecked on a strange coast, his unprejudiced observations, as far as they go, may deserve great attention, but it is altogether a different case when he is sent by any particular party, for then his uneducated mind appears in its true colours—the livery of his employers : and if this is not the case—if birth and education are worth nothing, the whole fabric of society must surely come to an end ; for why may not any man claim a high situation in the corps diplomatique, army, or navy, if his fellow-servant is deemed capable of succeeding such men as Colonel Denham, Captain Clapperton, Dr. Oudney, Lieutenant Toole, Major Laing, &c. &c. ?

Whatever is worth doing has always hitherto been considered as worthy of being done well.

But this sad necessity to which we are reduced clearly shows the narrow plan upon which we have been acting. The discovery of Africa on the system on which it has been conducted, deserted by men of rank or education, is now at its last gasp—it has literally bled to death; and the greatest and strongest proof of its desperate case is, that the very party which is now “impatiently waiting for the important accounts*,” which are to arrive from *Clapperton’s servant and his brother*, are heaping most unjustifiable abuse upon poor Caillié for being *illiterate!* Admitting that Caillié is as illiterate even as a servant, how comes it that, with so little but his own feeble funds; he reached and returned in triumph from Timbuctoo—a feat which poor Laing and our English-dressed travellers have all in succession been unable to perform? The answer which Caillié gives to the above question is as simple as that given by the pilgrim who boiled his peas. . . . “I WORE A TURBAN!” So much for the little-hat-coat-waistcoat-breeches-and-gaiter theory of our day!

We have now concluded a few observations which have naturally flowed from the fountains of the Nile. That they contain more bitterness than that pure water we very readily admit; but it requires alkali to neutralise acidity—if a man’s deliberate object is to oppose a small party which is merciless in its observations towards those who oppose it, he can know but little of the world, (“*Croyez-vous donc, Monsieur, qu’on fasse des révolutions avec de l’eau de rose?*”)

* We understand that very unsatisfactory “accounts” have lately arrived, and that the “savans” abroad are most properly drawing very freely on the “demi-savans” at home, on the principle of “Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die!”

if in doing anything he does not resolve to do his utmost—and, most conscientiously believing the whole theory to be erroneous, as a faithful tribute of respect to those travellers who have already perished, and for the sake of those young men who might yet thoughtlessly be induced to risk their lives and constitutions on so forlorn a hope, we acknowledge that it has been our humble endeavour to expose so vain and so merciless a system.

But to return to Bruce. He soon recovered from his despondency; he could not reason it away; and he says, “I resolved, therefore, to divert it, till I could, on more solid reflection, overcome its progress. I saw Strates expecting me on the side of the hill. ‘Strates,’ said I, ‘faithful squire! come and triumph with your Don Quixote at that island of Barataria to which we have most wisely and fortunately brought ourselves! Come and triumph with me over all the kings of the earth, all their armies, all their philosophers, and all their heroes!’ ‘Sir,’ says Strates, ‘I do not understand a word of what you say, and as little what you mean: you very well know I am no scholar. But you had much better leave that bog: come into the house, and look after Woldo; I fear he has something further to seek than your sash, for he has been talking with the old devil-worshipper ever since we arrived.’ ‘Come,’ said I, ‘take a draught of this excellent water, and drink with me a health to his Majesty King George III., and a long line of princes.’ I had in my hand a large cup, made of a cocoa-nut shell, which I procured in Arabia, and which was brim-full*. He drank to the king speedily and cheerfully, with the addition of ‘confusion to his enemies,’ and tossed up his cap

* This shell was brought home by Bruce, and is still preserved.

with a loud huzza. 'Now, friend,' said I, 'here is to a more humble, but still a sacred name; here is to—Maria*!' He asked if that was the Virgin Mary? I answered, 'In faith, I believe so, Strates.' He did not speak, but only gave a humph of disapprobation. 'Come, come,' said I, 'don't be peevish, I have but one toast more to drink.' 'Peevish or not peevish,' replied Strates, 'a drop of it shall never again across my throat: there is no humour in this—no joke. Show us something pleasant, as you used to do; but there is no jest in meddling with devil-worshippers, witchcraft and enchantments, to bring some disease upon one's self here, so far from home, in the fields. No, no; as many toasts in wine as you please, or better in brandy, but no more water for Strates.'"

A number of the Agows had appeared upon the hill, just before the valley, in silent astonishment at what Strates and Bruce could possibly be doing at the altar. Two or three only had come down to the edge of the swamp, and had seen the grimaces and action of Strates; on which they had asked Woldo, as he entered into the village, what was the meaning of all this? Woldo told them that the man was only out of his senses, having been bitten by a mad dog; with which they were perfectly satisfied, observing, that he would be infallibly cured by the Nile; but that the proper mode of curing such a misfortune was to drink the water in the morning fasting. "I was very well pleased," says Bruce, "both with this turn Woldo gave the action, and the remedy we stumbled upon by mere accident, which discovered a connexion, believed to subsist at this day, between this river and its ancient governor, the dog-star."

* A lady in England, to whom Bruce was very deeply attached.

After this scene of affected cheerfulness, Bruce retired to his tent, where he was again haunted by the reflections which he had in vain endeavoured to shake off. He says, "Relaxed, not refreshed, by unquiet and imperfect sleep, I started from my bed in the utmost agony. I went to the door of my tent; everything was still; the Nile, at whose head I stood, was not capable either to promote or to interrupt my slumbers; but the coolness and serenity of the night braced my nerves, and chased away those phantoms that, while in bed, had oppressed and tormented me."

Bruce remained at Geesh four days, during which time he was constantly occupied in making various surveys and astronomical observations. It appears from them that "the hillock of green sod" is in the middle of a small marsh of about eighty yards broad; it is about three feet high, and about twelve feet in diameter, surrounded by a wall of sod, at the foot of which there is a narrow trench, which collects the water. In the middle of this hillock there is a hole, filled with water, which has no ebullition or perceptible motion of any kind on its surface: this hole is about three feet in diameter, and about six feet deep. About ten feet from the hillock there is a second small fountain, about eleven inches in diameter, and eight feet deep; and at twenty feet there is another hole, some two feet broad and six feet deep. These holes, or altars, are surrounded by walls of sod, like the former. The water from all these joins; and the quantity, Bruce says, "would have filled a pipe of about two inches in diameter."

The result of about forty observations places these fountains in north latitude $10^{\circ} 59' 25''$, and $36^{\circ} 55' 30''$ east longitude. The mercury in the barometer stood at twenty-two inches, which indicates an alti-

tude above the level of the sea of more than two miles. The thermometer, on the 6th of November, in the morning was $4\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, at noon 96° , and at sun-set 46° .

Having now given the result of Bruce's observations, it is necessary to make a few very general remarks upon the subject.

There is, perhaps, no geographical problem which has occupied the attention of so many ages as the discovery of the sources of the Nile. If the Nile had flowed through a rich and an inhabited country, the information required would, like the water itself, have rushed rapidly from its source to its mouth; but in the great sandy desert of Nubia the problem was absorbed, and the river, thus flowing in mysterious solitude and silence, reached Egypt—having left its history behind it.

The curiosity, therefore, not only of the Egyptians, but of strangers of all countries, was constantly excited. The fruitless attempt of Cambyses to penetrate Ethiopia—the eager inquiries which Alexander is said to have made on his first arrival at the temple of Jupiter Ammon, and the expedition of Ptolemy Philadelphus, are the most ancient of these inquiries, which were occasionally the subject of discussion to the time of Bruce, and from his death up to the present day.

If a river, like a canal, was as broad and valuable at one end as at the other, its source would be a point of as much importance as its mouth; but we have just received an idea of what the source of a river really is, and in words, it may be defined to be that spot from which the most remote particle of its water proceeds.

In a populous country like England, where almost every field has been the subject of a lawsuit, and where everything is surveyed with the most scrupu-

lous accuracy, the source of the Thames has of course been determined, yet not one person out of a hundred thousand knows where it is; the reason being, that there is no practical use in the inquiry—all that one cares to know being how far the Thames is navigable; in short, at what point it ceases to be useful to the community. But if this be the case in a highly civilised country, how wild a business must it appear to search for the source of a river through sands and deserts, and savage, barbarous nations, merely to determine from what particular spot its most remote particle of water proceeds! In an army of soldiers, we might as well inquire which is the individual whose father or grandfather was born farthest from the capital; a question which some might call exceedingly curious, but which, we all perceive, would admit of endless and equally senseless discussion.

He who embarks in a useless speculation is subject to disappointments which no rational being can lament; and, although we have hitherto supported Bruce both in his facts and feelings, yet, in truth and justice, we have now to admit that, of the above observation, this enterprising traveller himself is a most remarkable example; for, after all his trouble and perseverance, there can be no doubt, 1st, that the fountains of Geesh are not the real source of the Nile; and, 2dly, that Bruce was not the first European who visited even them.

A glance at any common map will show that, at about sixteen degrees, or eleven hundred miles, from the line, at the boundary of the tropical rains, the river Nile splits into two branches—the white river and the blue river. The white river continues to run very nearly north and south; the blue river, bending towards the east, comes from Ethiopia, or, as we term it, Abyssinia. Now, a question naturally

arises, which of these two rivers is the principal stream? The Ethiopians have, of course, always claimed that distinction for the blue river; and Cambyses, Alexander, Ptolemy, and almost every one down to Bruce, looked to Ethiopia for the sources of the Nile; but the vote or verdict of man cannot alter truth, and most true it is that the white river is the main branch or artery of the Nile. Nay, much to Bruce's honour, he himself admits this; and declares, not only that the white river is by far the larger and deeper of the two, but evidently proceeds from a more remote source; since, instead of periodically rising and falling as the blue river does (which shows that it is created by the tropical rains), the waters of the white river are everlastingly flowing—which, as Bruce justly says, denotes that the river is fed by those distant rains, which are known to be always falling in the neighbourhood of the equator. Our honest traveller adds, that, if it was not for the constant supply of the white river, the waters of the blue or Abyssinian river (which is formed by the union of three great streams, the Mareb, the Bowiha, and the Tacazzé) would be absorbed in the sands of the desert of Nubia, and that the Nile would consequently never reach Egypt.

The real source of the Nile, therefore, still remains unknown, or rather it hangs in the equatorial clouds from which the rains descend.

Bruce, who had risked everything to solve the quixotical problem of his day, naturally clings to the fact, that the blue river was in Abyssinia, and even in Sennaar, considered as the Nile. His statement has lately been corroborated by Burckhardt, who, in his *Travels to Nubia*, in 1816, says—"It is usual with the native Arabs to call the branch of the river on which Sennaar lies, and which rises in Abyssinia,

by the name Nil, as well as that of Bahr el Azrek (blue river). Thus every one says that Sennaar is situated on the Nile; so far, therefore, Bruce is justified in styling himself the discoverer of the Nile; but I have often heard the Sennaar merchants declare, that the Bahr el Abyad (white river), which is the name invariably given to the more western branch, is considerably larger than the Nile."

But the blue river was not only looked upon as the Nile in Nubia and Abyssinia—it assuredly had always been considered so in Europe also; and, accordingly, Bruce certainly did reach the goal which human curiosity had so long been striving to attain.

With respect, however, to his having been the discoverer of the source of the blue river, or Nile, Bruce's memory must again meet with the unsatisfactory fate which this sort of inquiry deserves; for it must be admitted that he was *not* the first European who visited it. Peter Paez, the intelligent Jesuit, whose career has already appeared in our slight sketch of the history of Abyssinia, certainly visited (one hundred and fifty years before Bruce) these fountains, which he describes with very tolerable exactness; and although Bruce, eager and jealous, very naturally endeavours to detect small inaccuracies, yet it is perfectly evident that Paez's description is that of an eye-witness. It is true, Paez says that the fountains "arc about a league or a cannon-shot distant from Geesh"—whereas, on measuring this distance, Bruce found it to be only a third of a mile; but, in a strange country and atmosphere, a guess at distance is almost always an error, and a Jesuit's calculation of the range of a cannon-shot must, in any part of the world, have been equally liable to unintentional mistake.

But, though Paez saw and described the fountains

of Geesh before Bruce, yet it may fairly be said that Bruce was the person who first imparted the intelligence to the European public; for Paez's description, which was written in Portuguese, was published in Latin, after his death, by Athanasius Kircher, a brother Jesuit, well known for his extensive learning and voluminous writings; and appearing in such a form, and being also smothered with a number of improbable statements, made no progress beyond the little circle or society to which it was originally addressed.

Indeed, the mind of a Catholic priest, during the time of religious war, is so inflamed by his zealous but mistaken ardour, that his descriptions of placid nature are seldom worthy of attention. Jereme Lobo, for instance, in his *Travels in Abyssinia*, says—"My continual employment was the object of my mission." He then states that sixty monks of the Abyssinian religion threw themselves over a precipice rather than embrace the Catholic doctrines (which at least shows with what violence they were administered). "I continued," he says, "two years at my residence in Tigré, entirely taken up with the duties of my mission, preaching, confessing, baptizing." On finding, after a tedious search, the bones of Don Christopher de Gama, the Portuguese general, Lobo says—"I gathered the teeth and the lower jaw. No words can express the ecstasies I was transported with at seeing the relics of so great a man, and reflecting that it had pleased God to make me the instrument of their preservation; so that one day, if our holy father the Pope shall be so pleased, they may receive the veneration of the faithful."

Without offering any comments on this picture of the Pope, the faithful, and the decayed teeth of Don Christopher, the above extract might be sufficient to show how little attention the world was likely to pay

to the travels of the Jesuits in Abyssinia. But it is an indubitable truth, that, in Bruce's time, the discovery of the source of the Abyssinian river was still the idle problem of the day; and, therefore, although Paez had gone thither before him, and though Kircher had actually published Paez's account of these fountains, yet the intelligence never reached the public ear, the fact having been neutralised by the absurdities with which it was combined. In short, it does appear, that to Bruce the public is practically indebted for the description (whatever it may be worth) of the "hillock of green sod," the source of the Bahr el Azergue, one of the great branches of the Nile.

Bruce manfully performed his task; and in his day he did what, in our day, Captain Parry would have done, had he succeeded in fixing the British flag on the north pole of the earth. The humble individual who gallantly undertakes for his country a most dangerous service, is surely, if successful, entitled to his reward; and it is the country, or rather the age in which he lived, and not he, that should be held responsible for the propriety or folly of the problem.

But Bruce's solid reputation can well afford, if necessary, to throw aside altogether the bauble for which, as a young man, he so eagerly and enthusiastically contended; and the reader has only to glance his eye over the immense country which Bruce has delineated, to admit the justice of this observation. But to return to the narrative.

When Bruce first reached the fountains of Geesh, the miserable Agows eagerly assembled round Woldo, to inquire how long the party was to remain among them. Fasil's horse was quite sufficient to explain from whom the strangers had arrived; and it was consequently expected that they were to be maintained

as long as they should think proper to stop. Woldo, however, soon dissipated all their fears. He told them of the king's grant of the village of Geesh to Bruce; and added that he was come to live happily among them, to pay them for everything, and, moreover, that no military service would be required from them, either by the king or the governor of Damot. This joyful intelligence was quickly circulated among these simple people; and, when Bruce returned from the fountains, he met with a very hearty welcome at the village.

The Shum, the priest of the river, gave up his own house to Bruce, and his attendants were lodged in four or five others. "Our hearts," says Bruce, "were now perfectly at ease, and we passed a very merry evening. Strates, above all, endeavoured, with many a bumper of the good hydromel of Buré, to subdue the devil which he had swallowed in the enchanted water."

Woldo was also perfectly happy. Out of the sight of everything belonging to Fasil, but his horse, he displayed Bruce's articles for barter to the Shum, to whom he explained that oxen and sheep would be paid for in gold. The poor Shum, overpowered at the sight of so much wealth and generosity, told Woldo that he must beg to insist that Bruce and his attendants would take his daughters as their house-keepers. "The proposal was," says Bruce, "a most reasonable one, and readily accepted. He accordingly sent for three in an instant, and we delivered them their charge. The eldest, called Irepone, took it upon her readily; she was about sixteen years of age, of a stature above the middle size, but she was remarkably genteel, and, colour apart, her features would have made her a beauty in any country in Europe: she was, besides, very sprightly; we under-

stood not one word of her language, though she comprehended very easily the signs that we made.”



Kefla Abay, or "Servant of the River."

The next day a white cow was killed, and every one was invited to partake of her. The Shum ought to have been of the party, but he declined sitting or eating with the strangers, though his sons were not so scrupulous. He accordingly was left to pray to the Spirit of the River, which these poor people call "The Everlasting God, Light of the World, Eye of the World, God of Peace, Saviour, and Father of the Universe!"

Bruce asked the old Shum if ever he had seen the Spirit? he answered, without hesitation, "Yes, very frequently!"

The Shum, whose title was Kefla Abay, or "Servant of the River," was a man of about seventy. The honourable charge which he possessed had been in his family, he conceived, from the beginning of the world; and, as he was the happy father of eighty-four children, it appeared that his race was likely to flow as long as the Nile itself. He had a long white beard; round his body was wrapped a skin, which was fastened by a broad belt. Over this he wore a cloak, the hood of which covered his head; his legs were bare, but he wore sandals, which he threw off as soon as he approached the bog from which the Nile rises—a mark of respect which Bruce and his attendants were also required to perform.

The Agows, in whose country the Nile, or Blue River, rises, are, in point of number, one of the most considerable nations in Abyssinia, although they have been much weakened by their battles with the Galla tribes. They supply Gondar with cattle, honey, wheat, hides, wax, butter, &c. To prevent their butter from melting on the road, they mix with it the yellow root of a herb called mot-moco. This country, although within ten degrees of the line, is, from its elevation, healthy and temperate; the sun

is, of course, scorching, but the shade is cool and agreeable. The Agows are not said to be long livers, but their precise age it is very difficult to ascertain. "We saw," says Bruce, "a number of women, wrinkled and sun-burnt, so as scarce to appear human, wandering about under a burning sun, with one and sometimes two children upon their back, gathering the seeds of bent grass to make a kind of bread."

By the 9th of November Bruce had finished all his observations relating to these remarkable places: he had traced again, on foot, the whole course of the Nile, from its source to the plain of Goutto.

"Our business," says he, "being now done, nothing remained but to depart. We had passed our time in perfect harmony; the address of Woldo, and the great attachment of our friend Irepone, had kept our house in a cheerful abundance. We had lived, it is true, too magnificently for philosophers, but neither idly nor riotously: and, I believe, never will any sovereign of Geesh be again so popular, or reign over his subjects with greater mildness. I had practised medicine gratis, and killed, for three days successively, a cow each day, for the poor and the neighbours. I had clothed the high priest of the Nile from head to foot, as also his two sons, and had decorated two of his daughters with beads of all the colours of the rainbow, adding every other little present they seemed fond of, or that we thought would be agreeable. As for our amiable Irepone, we had reserved for her the choicest of our presents, the most valuable of every article we had with us, and a large proportion of every one of them; we gave her, besides, some gold: but she, more generous and noble in her sentiments than us, seemed to pay little attention to these, which announced to her the

separation from her friends; she tore her fine hair, which she had every day before braided in a newer and more graceful manner; she threw herself upon the ground in the house, and refused to see us mount on horseback or take our leave, and came not to the door till we were already set out—then followed us with her good wishes and her eyes, as far as she could see or be heard.

“I took my leave of Kefla Abay, the venerable priest of the most famous river in the world, who recommended me, with great earnestness, to the care of his god, which, as Strates humorously enough observed, meant nothing else than that he hoped the devil would take me. All the young men in the village, with lances and shields, attended us to Saint Michael Sacala, that is, to the borders of their country, and end of my little sovereignty.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Bruce returns to Gondar—His Residence there—Accompanies the King in the Battles of Serbraxos—Revolution at Gondar—Defeat and Overthrow of Ras Michael—Bruce returns to Gondar—and succeeds in obtaining Permission to leave Abyssinia.

ON the 10th of November, 1770, Bruce left Geesh to return to Gondar, and on the evening of the 11th, he reached the house of Shakala Welled Amlac, to whom he had been addressed by Fasil. This singular character was from home, but his wife, mother, and sisters received Bruce kindly, knowing him by report; and, without waiting for Amlac, a cow was instantly slaughtered.

The venerable mistress of this worthy family, Welled Amlac's mother, was a very stout, cheerful woman, and bore no signs of infirmity or old age: "but his wife," says Bruce, "was, on the contrary, as arrant a hag as ever acted the part on the stage; very active, however, and civil, and speaking very tolerable Amharic." His two sisters, about sixteen or seventeen, were really handsome; but Fasil's wife, who was there, was the most beautiful and graceful of them all; she seemed to be scarcely eighteen, tall, thin, and of a very agreeable carriage and manners. At first sight, a cast of melancholy seemed to hang upon her countenance, but this soon vanished, and she became very courteous, cheerful, and conversible.

"Fasil's two sisters," says Bruce, "had been out, helping my servants in disposing the baggage; but

when they had pitched my tent, and were about to lay the mattress for sleeping on, the eldest of these interrupted them, and not being able to make herself understood by the Greeks, she took it up, and threw it out of the tent-door: whilst no abuse or opprobrious names were spared by my servants; one of whom came to tell me her impudence, and that, if they understood her, she said I was to sleep with her this night, and they believed, therefore, that we were got into a house of thieves and murderers. To this I answered by a sharp reproof, desiring them to conform to everything the family ordered them.

“Immediately after this, Welled Amlac arrived, and brought the disagreeable news, that it was impossible to proceed to the ford of the Abay, as two of the neighbouring Shums were at variance about their respective districts, and in a day or two would decide their dispute by blows.”

Satisfied that Bruce understood him, Amlac put on the most cheerful countenance. Another cow was killed, great plenty of hydromel produced, and he prepared to regale his guests as sumptuously as possible, after the manner of the country. “We were there,” says Bruce, “as often before, obliged to overcome our repugnance to eating raw flesh. Shakala Welled Amlac set us the example, entertained us with the stories of his hunting elephants, and feats in the last wars, mostly roguish ones. The room where we were (which was indeed large, and contained himself, mother, wife, sisters, his horses, mules, and servants, night and day) was all hung round with the trunks of these elephants, which he had brought from the neighbouring Kolla, near Guesgue, and killed with his own hands; for he was one of the boldest and best horsemen in Abyssinia, and perfectly master of his arms.

“This Polyphemus feast being finished, the horn of hydromel went briskly about. Welled Amlac’s eldest sister, whose name was Melectanea, took a particular charge of me, and I began to find the necessity of retiring and going to bed while I was able. Here the former story came over again; the invariable custom of all Maitsha and the country of the Galla, of establishing a relationship, was insisted upon; and, as the young lady herself was present, during this polite dispute, I do not know whether it will not be thought a greater breach of delicacy to have refused than to have complied:—

But what success Vanessa met
Is to the world a secret yet;
Can never to mankind be told,
Nor shall the conscious muse unfold.”

The next day Bruce observed that Fasil’s wife still appeared in low spirits; he, therefore, conversed with her: she said her husband was at Gondar, that it was the custom of the country, that the conqueror should marry the wives of his enemies, and in grief she added, “Fasil will be married, therefore, to Michael’s wife, Ozoro Esther.” Bruce started at this declaration, remembering that he was losing his time, forgetful of a promise he had made that he would return as soon as possible to Gondar. He, therefore, at once resolved to decamp. “In the afternoon,” he says, “we distributed our presents among the ladies. Fasil’s wife was not forgot; and his sister, the beautiful Melectanea, was covered with beads, handkerchiefs, and ribands of all colours. Fasil’s wife, on my first request, gave me a lock of her fine hair from the root, which has ever since, and at this day does, suspend a plummet of an ounce and a half at the index of my three-foot quadrant.”

Accounts being thus settled, Bruce resumed his

journey, crossed the Nile at Delakus, and proceeded till three-quarters past seven, when he alighted at Googue, a considerable village, and, as he had already several times mistaken his way in the dark, he resolved to go no farther. "We found the people of Googue," says Bruce, "the most savage and inhospitable we had yet met with. Upon no account would they suffer us to enter their houses, and we were obliged to remain without, the greatest part of the night. At last they carried us to a house of good appearance, but refused absolutely to give us meat for ourselves, or horses; and, as we had not force, we were obliged to be content. It had rained violently in the evening, and we were all wet. We contented ourselves with lighting a large fire in the middle of the house, which we kept burning all night, as well for guard as for drying ourselves, though we little knew at the time that it was probably the only means of saving our lives; for, in the morning, we found the whole village sick of the fever, and two families had died out of the house where these people had put us."—This fever prevails in Abyssinia in all low grounds and plains, in the neighbourhood of all rivers which run in valleys; it is not in all places equally dangerous; but on the banks and neighbourhood of the Tacazzé it is particularly fatal, the valley where that river runs being very low and sultry, and also being full of large trees. It does not prevail in the high grounds, or mountains, or in places much exposed to the air.

On the 14th, at three-quarters past seven in the morning, Bruce left the inhospitable village of Googue; and for four days, under a burning sun, continued his journey towards Gondar, where his servants arrived on the 17th November. "Two

things," he says, "chiefly occupied my mind, and prevented me from accompanying my servants and baggage into Gondar. The first was my desire of instantly knowing the state of Ozoro Esther's health: the second was, to avoid Fasil, till I knew a little more about Ras Michael and the king." Bruce proceeded, therefore, to Koscam, and went straight to the Iteghe's apartment, but was not admitted, as she was at her devotions. In crossing one of the courts, however, he met a slave of Ozoro Esther, who, instead of answering the question he put to her, gave a loud shriek, and ran to inform her mistress. Bruce hastened to Ozoro Esther; he found her considerably recovered, her anxiety about Fasil having ceased.

During Bruce's absence, a great revolution had been effected at Gondar.

The reader must be reminded, that just before Bruce landed at Masuah, Ras Michael had caused one king to be assassinated, and his successor to be poisoned. From these acts, and from the whole tenor of his conduct, the Ras was universally hated and feared, and King Tecla Haimanout suffering from the unpopularity of his minister, his throne had, during Bruce's visit to Geesh, been usurped by Socinios, who immediately appointed Fasil Ras, giving him the command of every post of importance in the government of Abyssinia.

Still the people loved King Tecla Haimanout as much as they secretly detested Socinios, and Fasil, sensible of this feeling, and dreading the displeasure of Ras Michael, at last declared his intention of restoring Tecla Haimanout to the throne, and, encamping within two miles of Gondar, invited all people who wished to escape the vengeance of Michael, to join his standard. Socinios fled, but was taken by some soldiers, who stripped him naked, and

then giving him a good horse, dismissed him like Mazeppa to seek his own fortune.

As the servant of Ozoro Esther, Bruce proceeded to join the king's army; and on arriving at Mariam Ohha, where it was encamped, he waited on Ras Michael, who admitted him as soon as he was announced. On entering his presence Bruce kissed the ground, though Michael did everything in his power to prevent it; many compliments passed, and the Ras recommended Bruce, before all his attendants, to go at once to the king. "I had been," says Bruce, "jostled and almost squeezed to death attempting to enter, but large room was made me for retiring. The reception I had met with was the infallible rule according to which the courtiers were to speak to me from that time forward. Man is the same creature everywhere, although different in colour; the court of London and that of Abyssinia are, in their principles, one."

The king was surrounded by thousands of people, for the inhabitants of Gondar and all the neighbouring towns had assembled, fearing lest Ras Michael should consider their absence as a proof of adherence to the usurper Socinios. Bruce was very kindly received by the king, who had always expressed towards him feelings of esteem and regard. He kissed his hand, and, says Bruce, "as I took leave of him, I could not help reflecting, as I went, that of the vast multitude then in my sight, I was, perhaps, the only one destitute of hope or fear."

The hill before him was actually covered with people, and from the white cotton garments in which they were dressed, it appeared like snow. It was in the month of December, which, in Abyssinia, is the most agreeable time of the year. The sun and the rains were in the southern tropic, and the whole

scene had the appearance of a party of pleasure assembled to convoy the king to his capital. The priests from all the neighbouring convents, dressed in yellow or white cotton, and holding crosses in their hands, gave variety to the picture.

Ras Michael had brought with him about twenty thousand men from Tigré, the best soldiers in the empire; about six thousand were armed with muskets, about twelve thousand had lances and shields, and the rest were mounted on horses, and had been employed in scouring the country, to collect such unhappy people as were destined for public example.

On the morning of the 23rd of December, the Ras ordered the signal to be made for striking the tents; the whole army was instantly in motion, and at night it encamped on the banks of the river just below Gondar; in consequence of which a report was spread, that the king and Ras Michael had come determined to burn the town, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. This occasioned the utmost consternation, and caused many to fly to Fasil.

“As for me,” says Bruce, “the king’s behaviour showed me plainly all was not right, and an accident in the way confirmed it. He had desired me to ride before him, and show him the horse I had got from Fasil, which was then in great beauty and order, and which I had kept purposely for him. It happened that, crossing the deep bed of a brook, a plant of the kantuffa hung across it. I had upon my shoulders a white goat-skin, of which it did not take hold; but the king, who was dressed in the habit of peace, his long hair floating all around his face, wrapped up in his mantle, or thin cotton cloak, so that nothing but his eyes could be seen, was paying more attention to the horse than to the branch of kantuffa

beside him ; it took first hold of his hair, and the fold of the cloak that covered his head, then spread itself over his whole shoulder in such a manner, that notwithstanding all the help that could be given him, and that I had, at first seeing it, cut the principal bough asunder with my knife, no remedy remained but he must throw off the upper garment, and appear in the under one, or waistcoat, with his head and face bare before all the spectators.

“ This is accounted great disgrace to a king, who always appears covered in public. However, he did not seem to be ruffled, nor was there anything particular in his countenance more than before, but with great composure, and in rather a low voice, he called twice, ‘ Who is the Shum of this district ? ’ Unhappily he was not far off. A thin old man of sixty, and his son, about thirty, came trotting, as their custom is, naked to their girdle, and stood before the king, who was, by this time, quite clothed again. What had struck the old man’s fancy I know not, but he passed my horse laughing, and seemingly wonderfully content with himself. I could not help considering him as a type of mankind in general, never more confident and careless than when on the brink of destruction. The king asked if he was Shum of that place ? he answered in the affirmative, and added, which was not asked him, that the other was his son.

“ There is always near the king, when he marches, an officer called Kanitz Kitsera, the executioner of the camp ; he has upon the tore of his saddle a quantity of thongs made of bull hide, rolled up very artificially ; this is called the tarade. The king made a sign with his head and another with his hand, without speaking ; and two loops of the tarade were instantly thrown round the Shum and his son’s

neck, and they were both hoisted upon the same tree, the tarade cut, and the end made fast to a branch. They were both left hanging, but I thought so awkwardly, that they would not die for some minutes, and might surely have been saved had any one dared to cut them down; but fear had fallen upon every person who had not attended the king to Tigré*." This was but an omen of the executions which were immediately to follow.

In the evening of the 23rd, came Sanuda, the person who had made Socinios king, and who had been a Ras under him; he was received with great marks of favour, in reward of the treacherous part he had acted. He brought with him prisoners, Guebra Denghel, the Ras's son-in-law, one of the best and most amiable men in Abyssinia, but who had unfortunately embraced the wrong side of the question; and with him Sebaat Laab and Kefla Mariam, both men of great importance in Tigré. These were, one after the other, thrown violently on their faces before the king.

About two hours later came Ayto Aylo, whom

* Some years ago, the Pasha of Tripolizza, in riding through the town, inquired who had thrown some rubbish into the street? A remarkably honest-looking man instantly popped his head out of his window, to acknowledge that it was him. The Pasha made a slight sign to the executioner who attended him, and the poor man's head never returned to his shop!

Hassen Pasha, well known to our army in Egypt by the nickname of Djezzar, or "The Butcher," was a man of a much more merciful disposition. One day he went to inspect a small redoubt which had been thrown up by his particular desire: a part of it rather displeased him; but instead of barbarously sending for the head of his commanding engineer, he desired the executioner merely to bring him one of his ears. Some of Djezzar's best officers had slit noses, which proved that he possessed, by comparison, a very humane, considerate, and reflecting mind; for, after all, a one-eared man may enjoy in this world many little pleasures; whereas, when once his head is off, *voilà la pièce finie!*

the king had named governor of Begemder; he brought with him Chremation, brother to Socinios, and Abba Salama, Bruce's constant enemy, and who had even thrice endeavoured to have him assassinated. While they were untying Abba Salama, Bruce went into the presence-chamber, and stood behind the king's chair. Very soon afterwards Aylo's men brought in their prisoners, and, as is usual, threw them down violently with their faces to the ground; and their hands being bound behind them, they had a very rude fall upon their faces.

“Abba Salama rose in a violent passion; he struggled to loosen his hands, to perform the act of denouncing excommunication, which is by lifting the right hand and extending the forefinger; finding that impossible, he cried out, ‘Unloose my hands, or you are all excommunicated.’ It was with difficulty he could be prevailed upon to hear the king, who, with great courage and composure, or rather indifference, said to him, ‘You are the first ecclesiastical officer in my household; you are the third in the whole kingdom; but I have not yet learned you ever had power to curse your sovereign, or exhort his subjects to murder him. You are to be tried for this crime by the judges to-morrow, so prepare to show in your defence, upon what precepts of Christ, or his apostles, or upon what part of the general councils, you found your title to do this.’

“‘Let my hands be unloosed,’ cried the churchman violently; ‘I am a priest, a servant of God; and they have power, said David, to put kings in chains, and nobles in irons. And did not Samuel hew king Agag to pieces before the Lord! I excommunicate you, Tecla Haimanout!’ He was proceeding in this wild strain, when Tecla Mariam, son of the king's secretary, a young man, striking

him so violently on the face, that his mouth gushed out with blood, said, 'What! this in the king's presence?' Upon which both Chremation and Abba Salama were hurried out of the tent without being able to say more; indeed the blow seemed so much to have disconcerted the latter, that it deprived him of the power of speaking.

"In Abyssinia it is death at the time to strike, or lift the hand to strike, before the king; but in this case the provocation was considered so great, so sudden, and unexpected, that a slight reproof was ordered to be given to young Tecla Mariam, but he lost no favour for what he had done, either with the King, Michael, or the people.

"When the two prisoners were carried before the Ras, he refused to see them, but loaded them with irons, and committed them to close custody." On the 24th the drum beat, and the army was on their march by dawn of day; they halted a little after passing the rough ground, and then doubled their ranks, and formed into close order of battle, the king leading the centre; a few of his black horse were in two lines immediately before him, their spears pointed upwards, his officers and nobility on each side, and behind him the rest of the horse distributed in two wings. Prince George and Ayto Confu, son of Ras Michael, commanded two small bodies, not exceeding a hundred, who scoured the country, sometimes in front, and sometimes on the flank; they marched close and in great order, and every one trembled for the fate of Gondar. They passed the Mahometan town, and encamped upon the river Kahha, in front of the market-place.

There were at Gondar a set of mummers, who were a mixture of buffoons and ballad-singers. These people, upon all public occasions, run about the

streets. While these wretches, men and women, to the number of about thirty and upwards, were in a song celebrating Michael's return to Gondar, the Sire horse, on a signal made by the Ras, turned short about, fell upon the singers, and cut them all to pieces. In less than two minutes they were all laid dead upon the field, excepting one young man, who mortally wounded, had just strength enough to arrive within twenty yards of the king's horse, and there fell dead without speaking a word.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when Bruce entered Gondar; every person he met in the street wore the countenance of a condemned malefactor; the Ras went immediately to the palace with the king, who retired, as usual, to a kind of cage or lattice-window, where he always sits unseen when in council. Bruce proceeded to the council chamber, where four of the judges were seated. Abba Salama was brought to the foot of the table without irons, at perfect liberty. The accuser for the king began the charge against him with great force and eloquence. He stated, one by one, the crimes committed by him at different periods; concluding this black list with the charge of high treason, or cursing the king, and absolving his subjects from their allegiance, which he stated to be the greatest crime human nature was capable of, involving, in its consequences, all sorts of other crimes. Abba Salama did not often interrupt him, but to every new charge, he rudely pleaded not guilty, by exclaiming, "You lie." "It is a lie."

"Being desired to answer in his own defence, he commenced it with great dignity, and with an air of superiority very different from his behaviour in the king's tent the day before. He smiled, and made extremely light of the charges made against him

respecting women, which he said he would neither confess nor deny; but would only observe, that these might be crimes among the Franks (looking at Bruce), but were not so among the Christians of that country, who lived under a double dispensation, the law of Moses and the law of Christ. He said the Abyssinians were *Beni Israel*, that is, children of Israel; and that, in every age, the patriarchs had acted as he did, and were not less beloved of God. He went roundly into the murder of King Joas, and of his two brothers, Adigo and Aylo, on the mountain of Wechne, and he openly charged Michael with that crime, as also with poisoning the late king, Hatze Hannes, father of the present king."

The old Ras pretended not to hear this, by sometimes speaking to people standing behind him, sometimes by reading a paper; but he asked Bruce, who was standing immediately behind his chair, in a low voice, "What is the punishment in your country for such a crime?" Bruce replied, "High treason is punished with death in all the countries I have ever known." "This," says Bruce, "I owed to Abba Salama, and it was not long before I had my return."

Abba Salama, pointing to Bruce, then accused the Itegehe of living with Catholics, and he added, that it was against the law of the country that Bruce should be suffered to remain; that he was accursed, and ought to be stoned as an enemy to the Virgin Mary. There the Ras interrupted him, by saying, "Confine yourself to your own defence; clear yourself first, and then accuse any one you please."

When Abba Salama had concluded, the king's secretary sent up to the window the substance of his defence; the criminal was carried at some distance to the other end of the room, and the judges deliberated whilst the king was reading. Very few words

were said among the rest ; the Ras was all the time speaking to other people. After he had ended this, he called upon the youngest judge to give his opinion ; and he gave it as follows : “ He is guilty, and should die ; ” the same said all the officers, and after them the judges.

The following sentence was, therefore, pronounced upon him by the king :—“ He is guilty, and *shall die the death*. The hangman *shall* hang him upon a tree *to-day*.” The unfortunate Acab Saat was immediately hurried away by the guards to the place of execution, which is a large tree before the king’s gate ; where, uttering, to the very last moment, curses against Ras Michael, the king and Abuna, he was hanged in the very robes in which he used to sit before the king, without one ornament of his civil or sacerdotal pre-eminence having been taken from him before the execution. In going to the tree, he recollected that he had four hundred cows : these he bequeathed to priests who were to say prayers for his soul ; but the old Ras, with better judgment, ordered them to be brought to Gondar, and distributed among the soldiers.

Socinius’s brother was next called ; and, half dead with fear, he also was sentenced to be hanged. “ I went home,” says Bruce, “ and my house being but a few yards from the palace, I passed the two unfortunate people hanging upon the same branch.”

The next morning came on the trial of the unfortunate Guebra Denghel, Sebaat Laab, and Kefla Mariam : the Ras claimed his right of trying these three at his own house, as they were all subjects of his government of Tigré. Guebra Denghel bore his hard fortune with great unconcern, declaring that his only reason for taking up arms against the king was, that he saw no other way of preventing Michael’s tyranny and monstrous thirst of money and power.

He wished the king to know that this was his only motive for rebellion, and that, unless it had been to make this declaration, he would not have opened his mouth before so partial and so unjust a judge as he considered Michael to be.

Wellela Selasse, his only daughter, hearing the danger her father was in, broke suddenly out of Özoro Esther's apartment, which was contiguous; and rushing into the council-room at the instant her father was condemned to die, she threw herself at the Ras's feet in an attitude and with an expression of the most extreme sorrow; but the old tyrant spurned her away with his foot, and then ordered her father to be immediately hanged. Wellela Selasse fell speechless to the ground. The father, forgetful of his own situation, flew to his daughter's assistance, and they were both dragged out at separate doors—the one to death, the other to after sufferings, greater than death itself; for, though not seventeen, the Ras, who was her grandfather, after having deprived her of her parent, so alarmed her by his brutality, that in despair and agony of mind she swallowed poison! "I saw her," says Bruce, "in her last moments, but too late to give her any assistance; and she had told her women-servants and slaves, that she had taken arsenic, having no other way to avoid committing so monstrous a crime as incest with the murderer of her father."

The next to be tried were Kefla Mariam and Sebaat Laab, who were condemned by the Ras to lose their eyes—a very common punishment in Abyssinia to this day.

To avoid shocking the reader with any further details of these horrid cruelties, it will only be observed, that blood continued to be spilt as water, day after day, till the Epiphany; priests, laymen, young men and old, noble and vile, daily found their end by

the knife or by the cord. The bodies were hewn to pieces and scattered about the streets. "I was almost driven to despair," says Bruce, "at seeing my hunting dogs, twice let loose by the carelessness of my servants, bringing into the court-yard the heads and arms of slaughtered men, and which I could no way prevent but by the destruction of the dogs themselves; the quantity of carrion, and the stench of it, brought down the hyænas in hundreds from the neighbouring mountains; and, as few people in Gondar go out after it is dark, they enjoyed the streets by themselves, and seemed ready to dispute the possession of the city with the inhabitants. Often when I went home late from the palace (and it was this time the king chose chiefly for conversation), though I had but to pass the corner of the market-place before the palace, had lanterns with me, and was surrounded with armed men, I heard them grunting by twos and threes, so near me, as to be afraid they would take some opportunity of seizing me by the leg; a pistol would have frightened them, and made them speedily run, and I constantly carried two loaded at my girdle; but the discharging a pistol in the night would have alarmed every one that heard it in the town, and it was not now the time to add anything to people's fears. I at last scarcely ever went out, and nothing occupied my thoughts but how to escape from this bloody country by the way of Sennaar, and how I could best exert my power and influence over my faithful friend Yasine, at Ras el Feel, to pave my way, by assisting me to pass the deserts into Atbara."

The king, missing Bruce for some days at the palace, and hearing he had not been at Ras Michael's, began to inquire who had been with him. Ayto Confu soon found Yasine, who informed him of the whole matter; upon this Bruce was sent for to the

palace, where he found the king, without anybody but menial servants. He immediately remarked that Bruce looked very ill; which was indeed the case, as he had scarcely ate or slept since the king saw him last, or even for some days before. The king asked him, in a condoling tone, "What ailed him?" observing that, "besides looking sick, he seemed as if something had ruffled him, and put him out of humour." Bruce replied, that what he observed was true: that, coming across the market-place, he had seen Za Mariam, the Ras's door-keeper, with three men bound, one of whom he hacked to pieces in his presence;—that as he was running across the place, stopping his nose, Mariam called to him to stop till he should despatch the other two, as he wanted to speak to Bruce: that the soldiers immediately fell upon the two men, whose cries, Bruce said, were still remaining in his ears: that the hyænas at night would scarcely let him pass in the streets when he returned from the palace; and that the dogs fled into his house to eat pieces of human carcasses at leisure.

"Although," says Bruce, "the king's intention was to look grave, I saw it was all he could do to stifle a laugh at grievances he thought very little of." "The men you saw with Za Mariam just now," says he, "are rebels, sent by Kefla Yasous for examples: he has forced a junction with Tecla and Welleta Michael in Samen, and a road is now open through Woggora, and plenty established in Gondar. The men you saw suffer, were those that cut off the provisions from coming into the city; they have occasioned the death of many poor people: as for the hyæna, he never meddles with living people, he seeks carrion, and will soon clear the streets of those incumbrances that so much offend you. People say that they are the Falasha of the mountains, who take that shape of

the hyæna, and come down into the town to eat Christian flesh in the night." "If they depend upon Christian flesh, and eat no other," said Bruce, "perhaps the hyænas of Gondar will be the worst fed of any in the world!" "True," said the king, bursting out into loud laughter, "that may be; few of those that die by the knife anywhere are Christians, or have any religion at all; why then should you mind what they suffer?" "Sir," said I, "that is not my sentiment; if you were to order a dog to be tortured to death before me every morning, I could not bear it. The carcasses of Abba Salama, Guebra Denghel, and the rest, are still hanging where they were upon the tree; you smell the stench of them at the palace gate, and will soon, I apprehend, in the palace itself. This cannot be pleasant, and I do assure you it must be very pernicious to your health, if there was nothing else in it. At the battle of Fagitta, though you had no intention to retreat, yet you went half a day backward, to higher ground and purer air, to avoid the stench of the field; but here in the city you heap up carrion about your houses, where is your continual residence." "The Ras has given orders," said the king, gravely, "to remove all the dead bodies before the Epiphany, when we go down to keep that festival, and wash away all this pollution in the clear-running water of the Kahha; but tell me, Yagoube, is it really possible that you can take such things as these so much to heart? You are a brave man; we all know you are, and have seen it: we have all blamed you, stranger as you are in this country, for the little care you take of yourself; and yet about these things you are as much affected as the most cowardly woman, girl, or child could be."

"Sir," said Bruce, "I do not know if I am brave or not; but if to see men tortured, or murdered,

or to live among dead bodies without concern, be courage, I have it not, nor desire to have it. War is the profession of noble minds ; it is a glorious one ; it is the science and occupation of kings, and many wise, and many humane men have dedicated their whole life to the study of it in every country ; it softens men's manners, by obliging them to society, to assist, befriend, and even save one another, though at their own risk and danger."

In the eager expression of these manly sentiments, which sparkle in the moral darkness amidst which they appear, Bruce was interrupted by the arrival of a young nobleman, who, according to custom, threw himself on his face before the king.

Ras Michael was now announced, and Bruce made haste to get away. In the ante-chamber he passed the Ras, attended by a great many people, and endeavoured to slide by him in the crowd, but he noticed him, and called him before him. Bruce kissed his hands, and the Ras kept hold of one of them, saying, "My son is ill ; Ozoro Esther has just sent to me, and complains you visit her now no more. Go see the boy, and don't neglect Ozoro Esther ; she is one of your best friends." Bruce inquired if she was at Gondar, and was answered, "No ; she is at Koscam." He, therefore, went home to plan his route to Sennaar, and to prepare letters for Hagi Belal, a merchant there, to whom he was recommended from Arabia Felix.

On the 31st of December, 1770, the last day of a year which in the history of Bruce's life had been so eventful, he went to Koscam. The next night, on the 1st of January, 1771, Bruce was desired to wait on the king ; and after a very long discussion, he at last succeeded in obtaining permission to send letters to Sennaar, arranging his departure from

Abyssinia, under a solemn engagement, that as soon as he should recover his health in England, he would return with as many of his brethren and family as possible, with horses, muskets, and bayonets. "This permission," says Bruce, "greatly composed my mind at the time, as I now no longer considered myself as involved in that ancient and general rule of the country—*never to allow a stranger to quit Abyssinia.*"

While the king was keeping the festival of the Epiphany, he received a visit from the son of the governor of Shoa, who came to offer personal service, a present of five hundred ounces of gold, and one thousand horsemen ready equipped. This person had heard from some priests in his country, that there was a very strange white man, in favour with the king, at Gondar, who could do every thing but raise the dead; he accordingly requested to be made acquainted with Bruce, who, by the king's orders, waited upon him every morning, and, availing himself of this favourable opportunity, Bruce managed to procure the history of the Abyssinian kings, who had reigned in Shoa, which curious document he afterwards brought with him to Europe. The Moor Yasmine now returned from Sennaar, and informed Bruce, that, by the inquiries he had been able to make, it appeared that he would be probably well received if he could get to Sennaar, but that he would have very great difficulty in passing from Ras el Feel to the banks of the Dender. Bruce would most willingly have commenced his journey at once, being naturally most anxious to escape from the horrors of civil war, but the time had not yet arrived; for having embarked in the political stream, he was against his will still carried away by its eddies.

For many months the rebels, in immense numbers,

under the command of Gusho and Powussen, were committing every sort of violence, burning houses, barns, and villages. At last the cries of the people who came flying out of Gondar for protection, determined Ras Michael to risk a battle. He accordingly marched out of Gondar, taking with him the king, the Abuna, as head of the church, Ozoro Esther, and other principal people.

The king's army was composed of about thirty-two thousand men, of whom about seven thousand five hundred were mounted. In this army were a number of excellent officers, who had spent their lives in war. The whole was commanded in person by Ras Michael, who, seventy-four years of age, had passed half a century in a succession of victories.

The forces of the enemy amounted to about thirty thousand men. The king's army (if it may be so termed) was in a most undisciplined state. "All our officers," says Bruce, "had left their command, and were crowding about Ras Michael and the king; women bearing provisions, horns of liquor, and mills for grinding corn, upon their backs; idle women of all sorts, half dead with fear, crying and roaring, mounted upon mules; and men driving mules loaded with baggage, mingled with the troops, and passing through in all directions, presented such a tumultuous appearance, that it surpassed all description. There were above ten thousand women accompanying the army: the Ras had about fifty loaded with bouza, and the king, I suppose, near as many.

"The sight threw me for a moment into low spirits. I know not if the king saw it. I was perfectly silent, when he cried, 'Well, what do you say to us now, Yagoube?' I answered, 'Is this the order in which your majesty means to engage?' He laughed, and said, 'Aye, why not? you will

see.' 'If that is so,' I replied, 'I only hope it is the enemy's custom, as well as your majesty's, to be in no better order.' A partial engagement ensued, which lasted about an hour: in it Confu, son of Ozoro Esther, was severely wounded. Ras Michael, notwithstanding the natural hardness of his heart, showed great sensibility, and came to see him. Ozoro Esther also in the deepest concern attended her son, and both she and the Ras earnestly entreated Bruce to see him safe to Gondar. 'Go! go, for God's sake go,' said the Ras, 'Ozoro Esther has been here almost out of her senses!'"

Bruce therefore consented to accompany both Confu and Ozoro Esther to Koscam, and having done this, he then returned to the army.

Ras Michael now ordered the tents to be struck, and his whole army proceeded towards Begemder. He had scarcely taken up his position on the hill of Serbraxos when he was attacked by Powussen; a severe battle ensued, distinguished on both sides by feats of wild, undisciplined valour; however the king's troops prevailed, and Powussen retreated, having lost about nine hundred of his best men. Everybody seemed to agree that Ras Michael had shown a degree of intrepidity and military skill of a most astonishing description.

The day after the battle messengers arrived from Gusho and Powussen, offering allegiance to king Tecla Haimanout, on condition that Ras Michael should be sent, never to return, to his government of Tigré; but fear or gratitude induced the king to refuse their demands.

On the 19th of May intelligence was received that the whole rebel host was again in motion. The king's army instantly descended into the valley, and the troops were ready with lighted matches in their

hands, when a most violent storm of thunder, lightning, and rain ensued.

The army, therefore, fell back, and the storm subsiding, the evening was passed in pleasure and festivity.

All the young nobility were, as usual, at Ozoro Esther's. "It was with infinite pity," says Bruce, "I heard them thoughtlessly praying for a warm and fair day to-morrow, the evening of which many of them were never to see."

The next morning the troops returned to the plain, and took up their old position. In about half an hour the enemy's army was in motion. The Ras first perceived it, and immediately ordered the drums to be beat, and the trumpets to be sounded. The army advanced, covered with dust from the excessive dryness of the ground.

"In the middle of this great cloud," says Bruce, "we began to perceive indistinctly part of the horsemen, then a much greater number, and the figure of the horses more accurately defined, which came moving majestically upon us, sometimes partially seen, at other times concealed by being wrapt up in clouds and darkness; the whole made a most extraordinary, but truly picturesque appearance."

The whole of Powussen's army now appeared; they advanced riding forwards and backwards with great violence, and appeared to be diverting themselves, rather than attacking their enemy.

After a most desperate battle, the king's troops fell back, under the hill of Serbraxos, but on the right the rebel forces were obliged to retire. Near three thousand men perished on the king's side, and among them nearly one hundred and eighty young men of the best families in the kingdom. The enemy's loss amounted to about nine thousand men.

The king now received the compliments of his troops; and a most barbarous ceremony, which is still customary in Abyssinia, ensued. Each man, who had killed an enemy, appeared with a certain part of the man he had slain hanging upon the wrist of his right hand, and after making a speech, in which he extolled himself as the greatest hero that ever existed, he threw down his barbarous trophy before his chief.

The account which Bruce gave of this ceremony, was, at the expense of his reputation, of course disbelieved—the reason, as usual, being, that it was a savage custom which had not been described before; but Pearce, the English sailor, left in Abyssinia by Lord Valentia, confirms it. He says, in his letter published by the Literary Society of Bombay, in 1817, “I saw and counted eighteen hundred and sixty-five of these inhuman trophies brought before the Ras after not more than seven hours’ fight.”

Mr. Coffin, Lord Valentia’s valet, and who remained in Abyssinia from the time of Lord V.’s departure, until the year 1827, has verbally informed us, that he has himself seen upwards of two thousand of these trophies heaped before the Ras.

“For my own part,” says Bruce, “tired to death, low in spirits, and cursing the hour that brought me to such a country, I almost regretted I had not died that day in the field of Serbraxos. I went to bed, refusing to go to Ozoro Esther, who had sent for me. I could not help lamenting how well my apprehensions had been verified, that some of our companions at last night’s supper, so anxious for the appearance of morning, should never see its evening. Four of them, all young men, and of great hopes, were then lying dead and mangled on the field; two others, besides Engedan, had been also wounded. I had, however, a sound

and refreshing sleep. I think madness would have been the consequence, if this necessary refreshment had failed me; such was the horror I had conceived of my present situation."

About eleven o'clock next morning Bruce received an order from the Ras to attend him, and he was introduced to the king, who put a large chain of massive gold round his neck; the secretary saying, "Yagoube, the king does you this honour, not as payment for past services, but as a pledge that he will reward them, if you will put it in his power."

The chain consisted of one hundred and eighty-four links, each of them weighing 3 and 1-12th dwts. of fine gold. "It was with the utmost reluctance," says Bruce, "that, being in want of everything, I sold great part of this honourable distinction at Sennaar, in my return home; the remaining part is still in my possession. It is hoped my successors will never have the same excuse I had, for further diminishing this honourable monument which I have left them."

After this, a third battle was fought at Serbraxos, which, though obstinately contested, was not attended on either side with much loss. Soon after, secret intelligence reached Tecla Haimanout and Ras Michael, which made them instantly resolve to decamp by night and fall back upon Gondar. The confusion of this march in the dark was beyond all description; men, horses, and mules, were rolling promiscuously over each other. Ras Michael's mule fell, and threw him on his face in a puddle of water, but he was instantly lifted up unhurt, and placed again upon his mule. Proceeding onwards, the creature again fell, and threw the Ras a second time into the dirt; on which a general murmur and groan was heard from his attendants, who superstitiously interpreted his falls

as an omen that his power and fortune were gone from him for ever. On reaching Gondar, the king went to the palace, the Ras to his own house. The palace was quite deserted; even the king's slaves, of both sexes, had hidden themselves with the monks, and in the houses of private friends, so that the king was left with very few attendants. The following morning, Gondar was completely invested by Gusho and the confederate army, and towards it were now flocking in every direction all those people of family and property who, from fear of Ras Michael, had fled to Fasil. The capital was soon filled with men and arms; and Gusho, who had been born and bred in Gondar, was looked up to as the father of his country; he raised all Waggora in arms against Michael, so that not a man could pass between Tigré and Gondar.

These steps having been taken, a proclamation was now issued, "That all soldiers of the province of Tigré, or who had borne arms under Ras Michael, should, on the morrow before mid-day, bring their arms, offensive and defensive, and deliver them up, on a spot fixed upon near the church of Ledata, to commissaries appointed for the purpose of receiving them;" with further intimation to the inhabitants of Gondar, "that any arms found in any house in that town, after noon of the day of proclamation, should subject the owner of such house and arms to death, and the house or houses to be rased to their foundation." Six thousand of the Tigré troops belonging to the Ras's province at once laid down their arms. All the rest of the principal officers followed, and even the king's arms were surrendered.

The Ras, too brave to fear, too infirm to escape, resolutely continued in the house belonging to his office. He ate, drank, and slept as usual—rose, and

talking of the event with equanimity and apparent indifference, dressed himself as richly as possible in gold stuff; and then, with the utmost composure, awaited his death. Once only, when he heard that his disarmed troops had been treated with indignity by the populace, did he, for a moment, give vent to his feelings: he then burst into tears, exclaiming, "Before this, I could have died happy!"

The king also behaved with considerable firmness and composure; he had eaten nothing during the first day but some wheaten bread, which he divided with the few servants that remained about him. A body of lawless Galla troops entering Gondar unobserved, rushed into the palace, and into the presence of the king, before whom Bruce and two attendants were seated on the floor. The room, in the days of the luxury and splendour of the Abyssinian court, had been magnificently hung with mirrors which had been brought, at a great expense, from Venice. The largest of these was immediately smashed by the Galla, and they would probably have proceeded to murder the king and Bruce, but two hundred young men of Gondar, having heard that the Galla had got into the palace, rushed forward to defend their king, and obliged these savages to retire.

On the 1st of June, Gusho and Powussen came to the house of Ras Michael, to interrogate him as to his past conduct. They found him clothed in white serge, with a priest's cowl of the same material on his head;

When the devil grew sick, the devil a monk would be;

and the old Ras, seeing that his power was gone, and that ferocity and high personal courage could no longer avail him, resolved to endeavour to steal by fraud and hypocrisy that safety which he had not

force to obtain ; he, therefore, not very unlike one whose earthly, or rather unearthly career has but lately closed, wished it to be believed that " he had ended his political career," and had devoted the remainder of his days to peace, penitence, meditation, and prayer. Gusho and Powussen listened to him in sullen silence, and then proceeded to the king's palace, where it was determined that Gusho should be Ras.

On the 4th of June, Powussen marched into Gondar with a thousand horse, and without further ceremony, ordered Ras Michael to be placed on a mule, and to be led away to Begember. Gusho took possession of his house ; the king's officers and servants returned to the palace, the troops decamped, and Gondar once again was quiet.

Meanwhile, as Bruce's health had been daily declining, he had spent a considerable part of his time with the Iteghe and Ozoro Esther at Koscam. Here he had received intelligence from Sennaar that the whole of that country was in arms ; that for a white man to come thither from Ras el Feel would be almost an impossibility, for, besides the natural difficulty of the country and excessive heat of the climate, he would be in the utmost danger from the soldiery and slaves, who were in a complete state of insubordination. He was, therefore, conjured to abandon his intention, and either to remain in Abyssinia, or return as he came through Tigré ; " But," says Bruce, " besides that I was determined to attempt completing my journey through Sennaar and the desert, I by no means liked the risk of passing again through Masuah, to experience a second time the brutal manners of the Naybe and garrison of that place. I, therefore, resolved to complete my journey to Syene, the frontier of Egypt, by Sennaar and Nubia, or perish in the attempt.

“ It is here,” says Bruce, “ a proper period to finish the History of Abyssinia, as I was no further present at, or informed of, the public transactions which followed. My whole attention was now taken up in preparations for my return through the kingdom of Sennaar and the desert. Neither shall I take up the reader’s time with a long narrative of leave-taking, or what passed between me and those illustrious personages with whom I had lived so long in the most perfect and cordial friendship. Men of little and envious minds would perhaps think I was composing a panegyric upon myself, from which, therefore, I most willingly refrain. But the several marks of goodness, friendship, and esteem, which I received at parting, are confined within my own breast, where they never shall be effaced, but continue to furnish me with the most agreeable reflections, since they were the fruit alone of personal merit, and of honest, steady, and upright behaviour. All who had attempted the same journey hitherto had met with disappointment, disgrace, or death ; for my part, although I underwent every sort of toil, danger, and all manner of hardship, yet these were not confined to myself. I suffered always honourably, and in common with the rest of the state ; and when sunshiny days happened (for sunshiny days there were, and many brilliant ones too), of these I was permitted freely to partake ; and the most distinguished characters, both at court and in the army, were always ready to contribute, as far as possible, to promote what they thought or saw was the object of my pursuits or entertainment.”

As Bruce’s residence in Abyssinia is now rapidly hastening to a close, one may pause to observe of what honest materials his heart seems to have been composed. Personal courage, that gem of the human breast which, however roughly set, is brilliant even

in the rude conduct of the savage, shines with unusual lustre in Bruce's character ; while his gratitude to Captain Price, his friendship for those with whom he lived, his loyalty to his king, his attachment to Scotland, his native country, his respect for his ancestors, and other similar sentiments which have constantly escaped from him, prove him also to have been what is commonly called a good-hearted man. And surely no higher compliment can be paid to the heart of any man than to show that it possesses the magnetic properties of repelling enemies and of attracting friends.

Two days previous to his departure, the traveller called to take leave of the Iteghe, and found there Tensa Christos, one of the chief priests of Gondar. Bruce replied with great dignity and firmness to several impertinent questions put to him concerning his religion by this man. "And now, holy father," he said, "I have one last favour to ask of you, which is, your forgiveness, if I have at any time offended you ; your blessing, now that I am immediately to depart, if I have it not ; and your prayers while on my long and dangerous journey through countries of infidels and pagans."

A hum of applause sounded throughout the room. Tensa Christos was surprised apparently at Bruce's humility, and cried out, with tears in his eyes, "Is it possible, Yagoube, that you believe my prayers can do you any good?"—"I should not be a Christian, as I profess to be, father," replied Bruce, "if I had any doubt of the effect of good men's prayers." So saying, Bruce stooped to kiss the hand of Christos, who laid a small iron cross upon his head, and, to his great surprise, instead of a benediction, repeated the Lord's prayer. After which, Bruce made his obeisance to the Iteghe, and immediately withdrew,

it not being the custom, at public audience, to salute any one in the presence of the sovereign.

“Twenty greasy monks,” says Bruce, “however, had placed themselves in my way as I went out, that they might have the credit of giving me the blessing likewise after Tensa Christos. As I had very little faith in the prayers of these drones, so I had some reluctance to kiss their greasy hands and sleeves; however, in running this disagreeable gauntlet, I thus gave them my blessing in English:—Lord send you all a halter, as he did to Abba Salama (meaning the Acab Saat). But they, thinking I was recommending them to the patriarch Abba Salama, pronounced at random, with great seeming devotion, ‘Amen!—so be it.’”

This serio-comical, valedictory malediction, which Bruce bequeaths to “twenty greasy monks of Koscam,” abruptly closes his history of Abyssinia, and upon the distant sources of the Nile the curtain now drops! More than half a century has elapsed, yet no one has raised the veil which Bruce lifted up—no one has penetrated the mist through which he found his way—no one has encountered the dangers which he overcame.

Every “undiscovered country” is guarded by difficulties, real and imaginary, and the latter (“ay! there’s the rub!”) are oftentimes its best protectors.

For instance, in Columbus’s first voyage to America, the alteration of the compass, the urricanes, or hurricanes, the tropical rains, the waterspouts, the sea covered with weeds, the heat which made the vessels yawn and crack, the sword-fish which stabbed them, and the teredo which ate holes in them, were *real* dangers, of greater or less importance; but it is well known, that it was the *imaginary* dangers in the minds of his crew which Columbus had the

greatest difficulty to contend with. They dreaded the rocks of loadstone, which were to extract every iron bolt from the ship; they feared that, having once sailed over the belly of the round globe, they would have no power to return to its mouth; they thought that the trade-winds, which were treacherously propelling them, were also sternly forbidding their return; and, with great truth and reason, they reflected that, in the new world of waters which they were daring to explore (the very fishes of which were seen to fly!) they might meet with dangers and phenomena which it had never entered into the head of man to conceive. But as soon as land was discovered, the imaginary dangers vanished, and those who had afterwards to perform the voyage had only the real ones to contend with; and of this essential difference Columbus was so sensible, that he exemplified, by the breaking of an egg, how much easier it is to follow than to lead; and that, of penetrating new countries, it may very justly be said, "C'est le premier pas qui coûte."

Now, if the comparison be calmly continued between Columbus and Bruce, how does the matter stand? The voyage which confers immortal credit upon the former is now performed by every vessel that can dare go to sea: the journey which was effected by the latter, during upwards of sixty years, has never since been performed. Browne, Lord Valentia, Salt, Burckhardt, Pearce, &c., have all been travellers in that direction, but where Bruce led the way, no man has since followed. The fountains of Geesh, insignificant as they may be, have, since the visit of Bruce, been as much out of our view, as they were once beyond our knowledge. We have seen them, as the traveller sees by night the rude features of a mountain, which a single flash of

lightning most vividly displays for a moment, and then leaves him as he was, in darkness and confusion.

Yet by far the most arduous and dangerous undertaking in the history of Bruce's life remains to be related; for, whatever may have been his difficulties in Abyssinia,—however roughly he may have been treated there, still he was under the parental roof of Christianity; but he has now to hurry homewards, through the centre of some of the most rude, uncivilised, burning, barren countries in the world; and if the reader will but reflect on the names of the many distinguished individuals who, full of health and enthusiasm, have left Cairo to ascend the Nile, and have yet very early found it impossible to proceed, he will probably be induced to feel for poor Bruce, who at the eleventh hour, and with the fag-end of his constitution, had to undertake so painful and perilous a journey.

When Mr. Salt visited Abyssinia, nearly forty years after Bruce's departure, he was informed that Ras Michael, who was even then talked of as "the old Lion," had died in 1780, in the eighty-eighth year of his age. The lovely Ozoro Esther, too, was dead; and indeed almost all Bruce's friends had gone to their long homes.

"Yusuph," says Salt, "spoke of him (Bruce) with much regret. He, and every one with whom I have conversed, confirmed the character of Ras Michael as given by Bruce." "He left," said Dofter Esther, a learned Abyssinian, "a great name behind him."

CHAPTER XV.

Bruce leaves Gondar, and travels to Sennaar, the Capital of Nubia.

ON the 26th of December, 1771, at one o'clock in the afternoon, Bruce, after having resided in Abyssinia two years and a quarter, left Gondar, and proceeded to the palace at Koscam. The king, who had done every thing to delay his departure, still continued to encumber him with advice, and to throw several petty difficulties in his way; but Bruce at last declared to him, that his servants had already set out, that he was determined to follow them the next morning, and that he begged to be left to follow his own fortunes, whatever these might be.

The morning of his departure, an officer of rank and fifty horse soldiers were sent by the king to attend him; but, being perfectly sensible that any distinction with which he might travel in Abyssinia would increase his difficulties in getting through the wilds of Sennaar, he declined the escort, and, commencing his perilous journey, slowly ascended the mountain which overlooks the palace of Koscam.

He was accompanied by three Greeks, one of whom had been his servant ever since his departure from Cairo; another, named Georgis, was infirm, and nearly blind: the rest of the party consisted of an old Turkish Janissary, who had come into Abyssinia, in the escort of the Abuna, a Copt, who left Bruce at Sennaar, and a few common muleteers.

“All the disasters,” says Bruce, “which I had been threatened with in the course of that journey which I had thus begun, now presented themselves to my mind, and made, for a moment, a strong impression upon my spirits. But it was too late to draw back, the die was cast, for life or for death; home was before me, however distant! and if, through the protection of Providence, I should be fortunate enough to arrive there, I promised myself both ease and the applause of my country, and of all unprejudiced men of sense and learning in Europe, for having, by my own private efforts alone, completed a discovery, which had from early ages defied the address, industry, and courage of all the world.”

These expressions have been construed by Bruce's enemies into the language of arrogance and conceit. It would certainly have been well for him, if he had confined his thoughts to his own manly breast, and, treating his reader with cold suspicion, had declined to intrust him with the secret feelings of his heart;—however, right or wrong, prudent or imprudent, it was not in Bruce's nature to conceal his sentiments.

On the evening of the 28th, Bruce and his party were in the vicinity of a very thick wood, when they were suddenly surrounded by a multitude of men armed with lances, shields, slings, and clubs. As a volley of stones was thrown by these people, Bruce ordered a couple of shots to be fired over their heads. This hint they seemed perfectly to understand, but, retreating to the top of a hill further off, they continued whooping, shrieking, and making signs; however, Bruce sent a message by a woman, who agreed to go to them, that if they continued to show the smallest sign of violence, he would burn their town, and put every one of them to the sword. This

bravado had its effect, and a very submissive answer was returned.

For five days Bruce steadily continued his journey through a rugged country covered with thick woods. On the 2nd of January, 1772, he approached the town of Tcherkin, and pitched his tent in the market-place, which appeared like a beautiful lawn shaded with fine old trees of an enormous size, and watered by a limpid brook, which ran over pebbles as white as snow. As soon as he reached the town, a man called to say that he was the servant of Ayto Confu, and that he had orders to conduct Bruce into the presence of his master. He accordingly followed to a house built on the edge of a precipice, where he was startled, and most agreeably surprised, by being introduced to Ozoro Esther, whom he found sitting on an ottoman or couch, with the beautiful Tecla Mariam at her feet. "Ozoro Esther!" exclaimed Bruce, "I cannot speak for surprise; what is the meaning of your having left Gondar to come into this wilderness?" "There is nothing so strange in it," she replied; "the troops of Begemder have taken away my husband Ras Michael, God knows where, and, therefore, being now a single woman, I am resolved to go to Jerusalem to pray for my husband, to die there, and to be buried in the Holy Sepulchre. You would not stay with us, so we are going with you. Is there any thing surprising in all this?"

"But tell me truly," said Tecla Mariam, "you that know every thing by peeping and poring through those long glasses, did not you learn by the stars that we were to meet you here?" "Madam," answered Bruce, "if there was one star in the firmament that had announced to me such agreeable news, I should have relapsed into the idolatry of this country; and worshipped that star for the rest of my life."

Breakfast now appeared ; the conversation took a natural and very lively turn. Bruce learnt that the king, from gratitude to Ras Michael, had given some villages to Ozoro Esther, and that her son Ayto Confu, who happened to be going to Tcherkin to hunt, had offered to put her in possession of her new property.

“ We now,” says Bruce, “ wanted only the presence of Ayto Confu to make our happiness complete ; he came about four, and with him a great company. There was nothing but rejoicing on all sides. Seven ladies, relations and companions of Ozoro Esther, came with Ayto Confu, and I confess this to have been one of the happiest moments of my life. I quite forgot the disastrous journey I had before me, and all the dangers that awaited me. I began even to regret being so far on my way to leave Abyssinia for ever.”

Confu having come to Tcherkin on purpose to hunt, Bruce was easily persuaded to join in the amusement, particularly as he learnt that there was a great quantity of every sort of game, elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, &c. On the 6th, an hour before day-break, the party mounted their horses, attended by a number of people, who made hunting the elephant the particular business of their lives. These men dwell constantly in the woods, subsisting entirely on the flesh of the enormous animals which they slay. They are thin, slight, active people, of a swarthy complexion, but with European features, and are called Agageer, from the word Agar, which means “ to hamstring.”

The manner in which these people kill the elephant is as follows : two men absolutely naked mount a single horse ; one has nothing in his hand but a switch or a short stick which he uses to manage the

horse, while his comrade, armed with a broad sword, sits patiently behind him. As soon as the elephant is discovered feeding, the horsemen ride before him, as near his face as possible, and, crossing him in all directions, they each vauntingly exclaim, "I am such a man, and such a man; this is my horse that has such a name; I killed your father in such a place, and your grandfather in such another place, and now I am come to kill you, who are but an ass in comparison to them!" This nonsense (which is used by the Abyssinians to almost every description of enemy) the man actually fancies is understood by this enormous animal, who, getting at last vexed and angry at being "so pestered by a popinjay," rushes at the horse, following and turning after him, to endeavour to seize him with his trunk, or, by one blow with it, to level him with the dust. While he is thus occupied, the horseman suddenly wheels about, and then rapidly riding past the animal, the swordsman slips off and cuts the elephant's tendon just above the heel of the hind leg. The horseman again wheels, and returning at full gallop, his companion vaults up behind him. The mischief being done, and the poor victim as it were tethered to the ground, the horsemen leave him to search for another of the herd, while a party on foot attack him with lances, and at last put an end to his sufferings and his life.

One of the greatest dangers in riding after the elephant proceeds from the stumps of the trees which he breaks in forcing his way among them, and also from the young trees which, bending without breaking, recoil with such violence that they often have been known to dash both horse and rider to the ground; whereupon the elephant generally turns, and trampling on his tiny enemy, luxuriously tears

“ the lord of the creation ” limb by limb to pieces.— Besides this, the soil, like that of all hot countries during the dry season, is cracked and split into such deep chasms, that riding is attended with very great danger.

After hunting the elephant and the rhinoceros for some days, Bruce was anxious to proceed on his journey, but Ozoro Esther insisted on his remaining with her until she and her attendants returned to Gondar.

At last, on the 15th January, they separated. Bruce on that day bade adieu to his Abyssinian friends, and to the beautiful Ozoro Esther, for whom he had long secretly entertained a feeling very like love and affection.

With a heavy heart he now left Tcherkin, and the road being bad and intricate, and the camels overladen, he and his party proceeded very slowly. During the whole day, they travelled through woods which were almost impenetrable. The thermometer was often at 115°, there was little or no motion in the air, which quivered from the sun, and the ground was rent in every direction by the excessive heat. Occasionally they crossed pools of impure muddy water, the resort of buffaloes and elephants, and reaching the banks of the river Woldo, they passed the night there in considerable alarm from human footmarks in the sand, which, by the length of the foot, and the breadth of the heel, the guides pronounced to be Shangalla.

Early next morning they were again on their journey, and in about five hours they reached Sanchaha, the old frontier territory of Abyssinia, and which was subject to Bruce's government of Ras el Feel. The town consisted of about three hundred huts neatly built of canes, and curiously thatched with leaves of the same. The immense plain which

surrounds it belongs to no one, and its wilds and woods are the haunts of beasts of various descriptions.

As soon as Bruce had encamped, he sent to Gimbaro, the chief of the Sancha, to demand provisions for his party and their camels. A very impertinent answer was returned. Bruce immediately armed himself with a fusil and a pair of pistols, and took with him two of his servants, each carrying pistols and a ship's blunderbuss. After mounting a hill with such difficulty that they were several times obliged to pull each other up by the hands, they reached the residence of the chief, and entered a large room of about fifty feet in length. The walls were all covered with elephants' heads and trunks, and with the skeleton heads of rhinoceroses, enormous hippopotami, and giraffes; lions' skins were on the floor, and at the end of the room, naked and upright, stood Gimbaro, "the largest man," says Bruce, "I ever remember to have seen, perfectly black, flat-nosed, thick-lipped, and woolly-headed, a picture of those cannibal giants which we read of as inhabiting enchanted castles in the fairy tales."

Gimbaro scarcely noticed the traveller when first he entered the room, but finding that no obeisance was offered to himself, he at last stepped awkwardly forward, bowed, and attempted to kiss his hand. "I apprehend, sir," said Bruce with great firmness, and at the same time drawing away his hand, "you do not know me?" Gimbaro bowed, and said he did, but that he was not at first aware who it was that had encamped at the brook; he added, that the message he had sent was only in sport! "And was it sport, sir," said Bruce, "when you said you would send me the flesh of elephants to eat? Did you ever know a Christian eat any sort of flesh that a Mahometan killed?" "No," replied Gimbaro; and

begging Bruce's pardon, he promised to send him bread, honey, camels, &c.

Bruce, having thus gained his object, returned to his tent, and the next morning continued his march. The second day they were preceded on their journey by a lion, which generally kept about a gun-shot before them; but whenever it came to an arena or bare spot, the creature crouched down and growled, as if it had made up its mind to dispute the way. "Our beasts," says Bruce, "trembled, and were all covered with sweat, and could scarcely be kept on the road. As there seemed to be but one remedy for this difficulty, I took a long Turkish rifle gun, and crawling under a bank as near as possible, shot it in the body, so that it fell from the bank on the road before us quite dead, and even without muscular motion."

Proceeding on their journey, they came to the corpse of a man who had evidently been murdered, for his throat was cut, and he was also hamstrung. The next day they suffered very much—their clothes were torn to rags, and men and beasts were equally exhausted; the forests were swarming with game, particularly guinea-fowls and parroquets; and when one of the party fired his gun, the first that probably ever resounded in these woods, there was instantly such a wild scream of terror from birds on all sides, some flying to the place whence the noise came, and some flying from it, that the confusion of the moment was beyond all description.

Two days afterwards, Bruce reached the Guangue, which abounds with hippopotami and crocodiles, and was the largest river, except the Nile and Tacazzé, he had seen in Abyssinia. Shortly afterwards he arrived at Yasine's village, Hor Cacamoot, which means, literally, the valley of the shadow of death—

“A bad omen,” says Bruce, “for weak and wandering travellers as we were, surrounded by a multitude of dangers, and so far from home.”

“This,” says Bruce, “is, I suppose, one of the hottest countries in the known world. On the 1st day of March, at three o’clock in the afternoon, Fahrenheit’s thermometer, in the shade, was one hundred and fourteen degrees, which was at sixty-one at sunrise, and eighty-two at sunset. And yet this excessive heat did not make a proportional impression upon our feelings. The evenings, on the contrary, rather seemed cold, and we could hunt at mid-day; and this I constantly observed in this sultry country, that, what was hot by the glass, never appeared to carry with it anything proportionate in our sensations.”

Some time before Bruce left Gondar, he had been threatened with an attack of dysentery. On his arrival at Hor Cacamoot it grew worse, and had assumed many unpromising symptoms, when he was cured by the advice and application of a common Shangalla.

Bruce’s faithful friend, Yasine, had made every exertion to secure him a good reception from Fidele, the Sheikh of Atbara. The Sheikh of Beyla, by name Mahomet, was a man of high character for courage and probity; and Bruce had often corresponded with him upon the subject of horses for the king while he was at Gondar. He was greatly tormented with a most painful disorder, and, through Yasine, Bruce had several times sent soap-pills and lime, with directions how to make lime-water. Bruce, therefore, sent a servant with a letter to the Sheikh of Beyla, mentioning his intention of coming to Sennaar by the way of Teawa and Beyla, and desiring him to forward his servant to Sennaar.

But while he was making these vigorous exertions to advance, his exhausted body was gradually becoming unable to follow; the spirit, indeed, was willing, but the flesh was weak. Trembling under the burning heat of the climate, and feeble from the effects of the most weakening of disorders, "Yagoube, the white man," would probably have ended his career at this petty government of Ras el Feel, had it not been for the kind attention of Yasmine, and the skilful treatment of the black woolly-headed physician. But kindness, medicine, and time, at last recruited his strength; and after a delay of two months, he set out, on the 17th of March, from Hor Cacamoot, to proceed to Teawa, the capital of Atbara. His path was through thick brushwood: his companions were eleven naked men, driving before them asses laden with salt.

The second morning, they reached Surf el Shekh, which is the boundary of Ras el Feel; and here Bruce took a painful and affectionate leave of his sincere friend Yasmine, who showed at parting that love and steady attachment which he had maintained since his first acquaintance. The last tie which connected Bruce's heart with Abyssinia was now severed. He had said farewell to his last friend; and with a burning desert under his feet, and a still more burning sun over his head, he had now, in danger, sickness, and solitude, to prosecute his gloomy course.

At half-past seven in the evening, he came to Engaldi, a large basin or cavity, about thirty feet deep and several hundred yards in length, made for the Arabs who encamp there after the rains. The water was almost exhausted, and the little that remained had an intolerable stench. Thousands of guinea-fowls, partridges, and various de-

scriptions of birds, had crowded round to drink ; but it was a melancholy omen to see that they were reduced to absolute skeletons ; and as the French soldiers, in their retreat from Moscow, sat freezing into corpses over the dying embers of their fires, so these birds, from an opposite cause, were equally expiring from the gradual extinction of water.

At eight they came to Eradeeba, where is neither village nor water, but only a resting-place about half a mile square, which has been cleared from wood, that travellers, who pass to and from Atbara, might have an esplanade to guard themselves from being attacked unawares by the banditti which resort to those deserts.

At a quarter past eleven Bruce arrived at Quaicha, a bed of a torrent where there was no water : the wood seemed growing still thicker, and to be full of wild beasts, especially lions and hyænas. These did not fly from man, as those which Bruce had hitherto seen, but came boldly up, especially the hyæna, with apparently a resolution to attack them. On lighting a fire they retired for a time, but towards morning they came in greater numbers than before. A lion carried away one of the asses, and a hyæna attacked one of the men, tore his cloth from his middle, and wounded him in the back. "As we now expected," says Bruce, "to be instantly devoured, the present fear overcame the resolution we had made, not to use our fire-arms, unless in the utmost necessity. I fired two guns, and ordered my servants to fire two large ship-blunderbusses, which presently freed us from our troublesome guests. Two hyænas were killed ; and a large lion, being mortally wounded, was despatched by our men in the morning. They came no more near us ; but we heard numbers of

them howling at a distance till day-light, either from hunger or the smarts of the wounds they had received—perhaps from both; for each ship-blunderbuss had fifty small bullets, and the wood towards which they were directed, at the distance of about twenty yards, seemed to be crowded with these animals.”

Though this first day's journey from Falatty and Ras el Feel to Quaicha occupied eleven hours, the distance travelled was not more than ten miles; for the beasts were heavily laden, and it was with the utmost difficulty that they could force themselves through the thick woods, which scarcely admitted the rays of the sun. From this station, however, they enjoyed a most magnificent sight, the mountains, in almost every direction, being in a flame of fire.

The Arabs feed all their flocks upon the branches of trees. When, therefore, the water is dried up, and they can no longer stay, they set fire to the underwood, and to the dry grass below it. The flame runs under the trees, and scorches the leaves and new wood, without consuming the body of the tree. After the tropical rains begin, vegetation immediately returns, the springs increase, the rivers run, and the pools are again filled with water. Verdure being now in the greatest luxuriance, the Arabs revisit their former stations. This conflagration is performed at two seasons—in October and March.

After travelling two days, Bruce came to Rashid, a sandy desert, where he was surprised to see the branches of the shrubs and bushes covered with a shell of that white and red species of univalve called turbines. Some of these were three or four inches long, and not to be distinguished from the sea shells

of the same species which are brought in great quantities from the West Indian islands.

Bruce had now a new enemy to contend with. "We were just two hours," he says, "in coming to Rashid, for we were flying for our lives; the Simoom, or hot-wind, having struck us not long after we had set out from Inserrha, and our little company, all but myself, fell mortally sick with the quantity of poisonous vapour that they had imbibed. I apprehend, from Rashid to Imserrha, it is about five miles; and though it is one of the most dangerous halting-places between Ras el Feel and Sennaar, yet we were so enervated, our stomachs so weak, and our headachs so violent, that we could not pitch our tent, but each wrapping himself in his cloak, resigned himself immediately to sleep under the cool shade of the large trees."

While they were in this helpless state, a Ganjar Arab, who drove an ass laden with salt, took the opportunity of stealing one of the mules, and got safely off with his booty. Having refreshed themselves with a little sleep, the girbas or water skins were filled. On the 21st, the fifth day of their journey, they travelled about five hours; yet, from the weak state they were in, they had advanced but seven or eight miles, so dreadfully were the mules, camels, and horses, affected by the simoom. They drank repeatedly and copiously, but water seemed to afford them no refreshment.

Bruce's servants now called to him to come speedily. A lion had killed a deer, had eaten a part of it, and had retired, but five or six hyænas had seized the carcass. Most people are bold under the excitement of health or wine, but Cassius says that even Cæsar,

When the fit was on him,
Cried, give me some drink, Titinius,
Like a sick girl;

but neither the dysentery nor the simoom could subdue Bruce's enterprising spirit. "I hastened," he says, "upon the summons, carrying with me a musket and bayonet, and a ship-blunderbuss, with about forty small bullets in it. I crept through the bushes, and under banks, as near to them as possible, for fear of being seen; but the precaution seemed entirely superfluous, for though they observed me approaching, they did not seem disposed to leave their prey, but in their turn looked at me, raising the bristles upon their backs, shaking themselves as a dog does when he comes out of the water, and giving a short but terrible grunt. After which they fell to their prey again, as if they meant to despatch their deer first, and then come and settle their affairs with me. I now began to repent having ventured alone so near; but knowing, with the short weapon I had, the execution depended a good deal upon the distance, I still crept a little nearer, till I got as favourable a position as I could wish behind the root of a large tree that had fallen into the lake. Having set my musket at my hand, near and ready, I levelled my blunderbuss at the middle of the group, which were feeding voraciously, like as many swine, with a considerable noise, and in a civil war with each other. Two of them fell dead upon the spot; two more died about twenty yards' distance; but all the rest that could escape, fled without looking back, or showing any kind of resentment."

Bruce was here, as usual, accused of "exaggeration." People would not take into consideration the circumstances of the case; they would not consider that the noses of these savage hyænas, devouring the deer, were all close together, like the herd of critics who assembled over Bruce's book,—upon whom, if he had but fired a blunderbuss loaded with forty

slugs, two at least would have given up the ghost, while many more than two would have uttered very lame apologies for having accused him of exaggeration. But his performance was, very unjustly, only measured by the customs of this country; and because people in England were not in the habit of killing four hyænas at a shot, Bruce's statement was declared, like his blunderbuss, to have been overcharged.

Bruce was now much alarmed at finding some traps for birds, which, having been newly set, showed that the Arabs could not be very far off. He and his party, therefore, instantly proceeded. In the evening, having lost their way, they were obliged to halt in the wood. Here they were terrified at discovering that the water was entirely gone from the girbas. These skins had still the appearance of being full, but their horrid lightness suddenly discovered the contrary. The whole party were sick from the effect of the simoom, but the terror of being without water drove them to proceed. "A general murmur of fear and discontent," says Bruce, "prevailed through our whole company."

Next day (being the 6th from Ras el Feel), they set off in great despondency, but in a short time they providentially succeeded in regaining the road, and shortly afterwards reached a well called Imgellalib, containing plenty of water, a leathern bucket, and a straw rope. Every one pressed forwards to drink, and the fatal effects of this hurry were soon seen, for two Abyssinian Moors died immediately after drinking.—There was something unusually appalling in thus seeing death, as it were, on both sides,—men dying from thirst, and others dying from quenching it!

The thick forests which, without interruption, had

reached from Tcherkin, ended here. The country was perfectly flat, and contained very little water. To destroy the flies the Arabs had burned the grass, and Bruce had no means of avoiding the rays of the scorching sun, and the pestilential breath of the simoom, but by seeking shelter in the tent, which was insufferably close and hot.

The next day they traversed an extensive plain, in which is situated Teawa, the capital, or principal village, of Atbara. The thermometer slung under the camel, in the shade of the girba, was now from 111° to $119\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. At six in the evening they arrived at the village of Carigana, "whose inhabitants," says Bruce, "had all perished with hunger the year before; their wretched bones being unburied and scattered upon the surface of the ground where the village formerly stood. We encamped among the bones of the dead; no space could be found free from them, and on the 23rd at six in the morning, full of horror at this miserable spectacle, we set out for Teawa." Late in the evening, when they had arrived within a quarter of a mile from this capital, they were met by a man on horseback, clothed in a large loose gown of red camlet, with a white muslin turban on his head, and attended by about twenty naked servants on foot, armed with lances, and preceded by a pipe and two small drums. The leader of this savage band was about seventy, with a very long beard, and a graceful appearance. It was with the utmost difficulty that he could be prevailed upon to mount his horse, as he declared it was his intention to walk by the side of Bruce's mule, till he entered the town of Teawa; however, mounting at last, he made a great display of his horsemanship, as a mark of humiliation or politeness. On entering the town, they passed a very commodious house, the residence ordered for

Bruce by the Sheikh, and after crossing the square they came to the Sheikh's house, or rather his collection of houses, which were of one story high and built of canes. They then entered a large hall of unburnt bricks covered with straw mats. In the middle there was a chair to which obeisance was made, it being considered as the seat of the Grand Seignior. The Sheikh was sitting on the ground, affecting humility and to be devoutly occupied in reading the Koran. When Bruce entered, he seemed to be surprised, and made an attempt as if to rise, but the traveller prevented it, by holding him down by his hand, which he kissed.

“ I shall not fatigue the reader,” says Bruce, “ with the uninteresting conversation that passed at this first interview. He affected to admire my size and apparent strength, introduced some loose hints about Abyssinian women ; and, in general, pretended to blame me for exposing myself to travel in such a country. In return, I complained of the extreme fatigue of the journey and heat, the beasts of prey, the thick woods without shade, the want of water, and, above all, the poisonous blasts of the simoom that had almost overcome me, the effects of which I was at that instant feeling.

“ He then blamed himself very politely, in a manner natural to the Arabs, for having suffered me to come to him before I had reposed myself, which he excused by his desire of seeing so *great* a man as me. He said also, that he would detain me no longer ; bid me to repose a day or two in quiet and safety ; and upon my rising to go away, he got up likewise, and holding me by the hand, said, ‘ The greatest part of the dangers you have passed in the way are, I believe, as yet unknown to you. Your Moor, Yasmine, of Ras el Feel, is a thief worse than

any in Habesh. Several times you escaped very narrowly, and by mere chance, from being cut off by Arabs whom Yasine had posted to murder you. But you have a clean heart and clean hands. God saw their designs and protected you : and I may say also on my own part, I was not wanting.' Being then on my legs for retiring, I returned no answer, but the usual one (Ullah Kerim), *i.e.* God is merciful!"

Bruce and his party had scarcely taken possession of their lodging, and had but just thrown off their clothes to enjoy rest and ease, when several slaves of both sexes appeared with a quantity of dishes of meat from the Sheikh, who also sent flattering compliments and good wishes. But Bruce was very much astonished at one young man, who, putting his mouth to his ear, whispered these few words of comfort. "Seitan Fidele ! el Sheikh el Atbara Seitan !" (Fidele is the devil, the Sheikh of Atbara is the devil himself!)

Bruce, fearing from this hint that he was in danger, privately and prudently despatched a man to Ras el Feel, begging Yasine to send some person in the name of the king of Abyssinia, or of Ayto Confu, to remonstrate against his detention : until an answer could arrive, he had resolved to see as little of the Sheikh as possible ; but by and by, getting restless and anxious to depart, he waited on the Sheikh with presents ; and these being apparently very graciously received, he asked for camels. The Sheikh replied that they were fifteen days off, in the sandy desert, for fear of the flies ; added that the road to Sennaar was in a very unsettled state, and made many other trifling excuses. At last his real object could no longer be concealed, and he openly insisted on having a part of the treasure which he declared that Bruce was carrying with him.

Bruce resolutely refused to give him any thing.

And the wretch then endeavoured to have him assassinated by Soliman, to whom he offered half the plunder of his baggage; but Soliman saved his life by declaring that the stranger had no treasure, possessing only a few instruments and glass bottles, the use of which no one understood but himself.

Bruce was again sent for by the Sheikh. He was in the alcove of a spacious room, sitting on a sofa surrounded by curtains. After he had taken two whiffs of his pipe, and when the slave had left the room, "Are you prepared," he said, "have you brought the money along with you?" Bruce replied, "My servants are at the other door, and have the vomit you wanted." "Curse you and the vomit too," says he with great passion: "I want money, and not poison. Where are your piastres?" "I am a bad person," replied Bruce, "Fidele, to furnish you with either. I have neither money nor poison; but I advise you to drink a little warm water to clear your stomach, cool your head, and then lie down and compose yourself; I will see you to-morrow morning." Bruce was going out, when the Sheikh exclaimed, "Hakim, infidel, or devil, or whatever is your name, hearken to what I say. Consider where you are; this is the room where Mek Baady, a king, was slain by the hand of my father: look at his blood, where it has stained the floor, which never could be washed out. I am informed you have twenty thousand piastres in gold with you; either give me two thousand before you go out of this chamber, or you shall die; I will put you to death with my own hand." Upon this he took up his sword that was lying at the head of his sofa, and, drawing it with a bravado, threw the scabbard into the middle of the room; and, tucking the sleeve of his shirt above his elbow, like a butcher, he said, "I wait your answer."

Bruce stepped one pace backwards, and dropped the burnoose behind him, holding a little blunderbuss in his hand, without taking it off the belt. In a firm tone of voice, he replied, "This is my answer: I am not a man, as I have told you before, to die like a beast by the hand of a drunkard; on your life, I charge you, stir not from your sofa."—"I had no need," says Bruce, "to give this injunction; he heard the noise which the closing the joint in the stock of the blunderbuss made, and thought I had cocked it, and was instantly to fire. He let his sword drop, and threw himself on his back on the sofa, crying, 'For God's sake, Hakim, I was but jesting.'" In all climates, and under all circumstances, the bully is always a coward. Bruce, however, was only acting on the defensive; it was neither his intention nor his wish to triumph over the Sheikh, and he therefore most willingly accepted the explanation, and retired, calmly wishing his enemy a good night.

About a week afterwards letters arrived from Yasiné, declaring that, unless Bruce was instantly allowed to depart, he would burn every stalk of corn between Beyla and Teawa. This threat had the desired effect; and, after having been most vexatiously detained more than three weeks, Bruce received a message to say that the camels were all ready—that girbas for water and provisions of all sorts would be furnished, and that he might set out as soon as he pleased, provided he would promise to forgive the Skeikh, and not to make any complaint against him at Sennaar or elsewhere. This savage agreement being concluded, Bruce was at last suffered to escape from Teawa.

For the first seven hours his path was through a barren, sandy plain, without a vestige of any living creature, without water, and without grass—"a

country," says Bruce, "that seemed under the immediate curse of Heaven."

After travelling all night, they rested at Abou Jehaarat till the afternoon. The sun was intensely hot, but fortunately there were some shepherds' caves into which they crept for shelter. On the 19th of April they again set out, and that evening arrived at Beyla. At the very entrance of the town they were met by Mahomet, the Sheikh, who said he looked upon them as beings who had risen from the dead, and that they must be good people to have escaped from the Sheikh of Atbara! Mahomet provided all sorts of refreshments; and the whole party were filled with joy, except Bruce, who was suffering so severely from the Bengazi ague, that he had the greatest repugnance even to the smell of meat. He had, besides, a violent headache; so, having drunk a quantity of warm water to serve as an emetic, he retired "*impransus*," and supperless to his bed—a buffalo's hide.

There is no water at Beyla but what is got from deep wells. Large plantations of Indian corn were everywhere about the town. The inhabitants were in continual apprehension from the Arabs Daveina at Sim-Sim, about forty miles from them; and from another powerful race called Wed abd el Gin—*Son of the slaves of the Devil*—who live to the southwest, between the Dender and the Nile. Beyla is another frontier town of Sennaar, on the side of Sim-Sim; and between Teawa and this, on the Sennaar side, and Ras el Feel, Nara, and Tchelga, upon the Abyssinian side, all is desert and waste, the Arabs only suffering the water to remain there without villages near it, that they and their flocks may come at certain seasons while the grass grows, and the pools or springs fill elsewhere.

On the 21st of April, Bruce and his party left Beyla. After travelling four days, they crossed the Dender river, and came to a large plain, in which were a number of villages, nearly of one size, and forming a semicircle. The plain was of a red, soapy earth, and the country is in perpetual cultivation. The villages were inhabited by soldiers of the Mek of Sennaar, who have small features, but are woolly-headed and flat-nosed, like negroes. Their masters at Sennaar pretend to be Mahometans, yet they have never attempted to convert these Nuba; on the contrary, they entertain, in every village, a number of pagan priests, who receive soldiers' pay. These people worship the moon, and appear delighted to see her shine. Coming out of their dark huts, they express great joy at her brightness, and they celebrate the birth of every new moon. They are immoderately fond of swine's flesh, and maintain great herds of these animals. There is no running stream in the immense plain which they inhabit; their water is all procured from draw-wells.

On the 25th, Bruce set out from the villages of the Nuba, intending to reach Basboch, which is the ferry over the Nile; but he had scarcely advanced two miles into the plain, when he and his party were enveloped by that sort of whirlwind which, at sea, forms the water-spout. "The plain," says Bruce, "was red earth, which had been plentifully moistened by a shower in the night-time. The unfortunate camel that had been taken by the Cohala seemed to be nearly in the centre of the vortex. The animal was lifted and thrown down at a considerable distance, and several of its ribs broken. Although, as far as I could guess, I was not near the centre, it whirled me off my feet, and threw me down upon my face, so as to make my nose gush out with blood. Two

of the servants, likewise, had the same fate. It plastered us all over with mud, almost as smoothly as could have been done with a trowel. It took away my sense of breathing for an instant, and my mouth and nose were full of mud when I recovered. I guess the sphere of its action to be about two hundred feet. It demolished one half of a small hut, as if it had been cut through with a knife, and dispersed the materials all over the plain, leaving the other half standing.

“As soon as we recovered ourselves, we took refuge in a village, from fear only, for we saw no vestige of any other whirlwind. It involved a great quantity of rain, which the Nuba of the villages told us was very fortunate, and portended good luck to us, and a prosperous journey; for they said that, had dust and sand arisen with the whirlwind in the same proportion it would have done had not the earth been moistened, we should all infallibly have been suffocated; and they cautioned us, by saying, that tempests were very frequent in the beginning and end of the rainy season, and whenever we should see one of them coming, to fall down upon our faces, keeping our lips close to the ground, and so let it pass; and thus it would neither have power to carry us off our feet, nor suffocate us, which was the ordinary case.

“Our kind landlords, the Nuba, gave us a hearty welcome, and helped us to wash our clothes first, and then to dry them. When I was stripped naked, they saw the blood running from my nose, and said, they could not have thought that one so white as me could have been capable of bleeding.”

These people gave Bruce a piece of roasted hog, which he ate, very much to the satisfaction of the Nuba. In return, as the camel was lame, Bruce

ordered it to be killed, and the flesh to be given to the Nuba of the village, who feasted upon it for several days. With these people Bruce spent a very cheerful evening, and then, having a clean hut, he retired to rest himself from the effects of the whirlwind.

On the 26th, he left the village, his way still being across an immense plain. After encountering several violent storms of thunder, lightning, and rain, he arrived at Basboch—a large collection of huts bearing the appearance of a town—where the governor, a venerable old man of about seventy, received him with considerable dignity and urbanity. “Christian,” said he, taking him by the hand, “what dost thou at such a time in such a country?”

Basboch is on the eastern bank of the Nile, or Blue river, not a quarter of a mile from the ford below. The river here runs north and south; towards the sides it is shallow, but deep in the middle of the current, and in this part it is much infested with crocodiles. Sennaar is two miles and a half S.S.W. of it. “We heard,” says Bruce, “the evening drum very distinctly, and not without anxiety, when we reflected to what a brutish people, according to all accounts, we were about to trust ourselves.”

After waiting at this place three days, Bruce and his party having at last received permission to enter Sennaar, the capital of Nubia, they were conducted to a very spacious good house, belonging to the Sheikh himself, and about a quarter of a mile from the palace. The following morning a messenger came from the king, desiring Bruce to wait upon him.

The palace, which covers a prodigious deal of ground, is one story high, built of clay, and the floors of earth. The king was in a small room which was covered with a Persian carpet; the walls were hung with tapestry. The king was sitting upon a mattress,

laid on the ground, which was likewise covered with a Persian rug, and round him were a number of cushions of Venetian cloth of gold. His dress did not correspond with this magnificence; for it was nothing but a large common loose shirt of Surat blue cloth. His head was uncovered; he wore his own short black hair, and was as white in colour as an Arab. He seemed to be a man about thirty-four; his feet were bare, but covered by his shirt. "He had," says Bruce, "a very plebeian countenance, on which was stamped no decided character; I should rather have guessed him to be a soft, timid, irresolute man. At my coming forward and kissing his hand, he looked at me for a minute as if undetermined what to say. He then asked for an Abyssinian interpreter, as there are many of these about the palace. I said to him in Arabic, 'That I apprehended I understood as much of that language as would enable me to answer any question he had to put to me.' Upon which he turned to the people that were with him. 'Down-right Arabic, indeed! You did not learn that language in Habesh?' said he to me. I answered, 'No; I have been in Egypt, Turkey, and Arabia, where I learned it; but I have likewise often spoken it in Abyssinia, where Greek, Turkish, and several other languages were used.' He said, 'Impossible! he did not think they knew anything of languages excepting their own, in Abyssinia.'"

There were sitting in the side of the room, opposite to him, four men dressed in white cotton shirts, with a white shawl covering their heads and part of their face, by which it was known they were religious men, or men of learning, or of the law. Bruce presented first the Sherriffe of Mecca's letter, then one from the king of Abyssinia. The king took them both and read them, and said, "You are a physician

and a soldier." "Both in time of need," replied Bruce. "But the Sherriffe's letter," said the Sheikh, "tells me also, that you are a nobleman in the service of a great king that they call Englise-man, who is master of all the Indies, and who has Mahometan as well as Christian subjects, and allows them all to be governed by their own laws." "Though I never said so to the Sherriffe," replied Bruce, "yet it is true; I am as noble as any individual in my nation, and am also servant to the greatest king now reigning upon earth, of whose dominions, it is likewise truly said, these Indies are but a small part." "How comes it," said the king, "you that are so noble and learned, that you know all things, all languages, and so brave that you fear no danger, but pass, with two or three old men, into such countries as this and Habesh, where Baady, my father, perished with an army—how comes it that you do not stay at home and enjoy yourself, eat, drink, take pleasure, and rest, and not wander like a poor man, a prey to every danger?" "You, Sir," replied Bruce, "may know some of this sort of men; certainly you do know them; for there are in your religion, as well as in mine, men of learning, and those too of great rank and nobility, who, on account of sins they have committed, or vows they have made, renounce the world, its riches, and pleasures: they lay down their nobility, and become humble and poor, so as often to be insulted by wicked and low men, not having the fear of God before their eyes." "True, these are Dervish," said the three men of learning. "I am then one of these Dervish," said Bruce, "content with the bread that is given me, and bound for some years to travel in hardships and danger, doing all the good I can to the poor and rich, serving every man and hurting none." "Tybe! that is well," said the king. "And how long have you been travelling

about?" "Near twenty years," replied Bruce. "You must be very young," observed the king, "to have committed so many sins, and so early; they must all have been with women?" "Part of them, I suppose, were," replied Bruce, "but I did not say that I was one of those who travelled on account of their sins, but that there were some Dervishes that did so on account of their vows, and some to learn wisdom." The king now made a sign, and a slave brought a cushion, which Bruce would have refused, but was forced to sit down upon it.

A *cadi* who was present then asked Bruce when the *Hagiuge Magiuge* were to arrive? "*Hagiuge Magiuge*," said the *cadi*, "are little people, not so big as bees, or like the *zimb*, or fly of *Sennaar*, that come in great swarms out of the earth, aye, in multitudes that cannot be counted; two of their chiefs are to ride upon an ass, and every hair of that ass is to be a pipe, and every pipe is to play a different kind of music, and all that hear and follow them are carried to hell." "I know them not," says Bruce, "and in the name of the Lord, I fear them not, were they twice as little as you say they are, and twice as numerous. I trust in God I shall never be so fond of music as to go to hell after an ass, for all the tunes that he or they can play." The king laughed violently. Bruce then went away, and found a number of people in the street, all offering him some taunt or affront. "I passed," he says, "through the great square before the palace, and could not help shuddering, upon reflection, at what had happened in that spot to the unfortunate *M. du Roule* and his companions, though under a protection which should have secured them from all danger, every part of which I was then unprovided with."

The drum beat a little after six o'clock in the evening. Bruce then had a very comfortable dinner sent

to him, which consisted of camel's flesh stewed with an herb, a slimy substance, called bammia. After having dined, and finished the journal of the day, he began to unpack his instruments, when a servant came from the palace, telling him to bring his present to the king. "I sorted," says Bruce, "the separate articles with all the speed I could, and we went directly to the palace. The king was then sitting in a large apartment; he was naked, but several cloths lying upon his knee and about him, and a servant was rubbing him over with very stinking butter or grease, with which his hair was dropping, as if wet with water. Large as the room was, it could be smelled through the whole of it. The king asked me, if ever I greased myself as he did? I said, 'Very seldom, but fancied it would be very expensive.' He then told me that it was elephant's grease, which made people strong, and preserved the skin very smooth."

This simple toilet being finished, Bruce produced his present, which he said the king of Abyssinia had sent, hoping that, according to the faith and custom of nations, he would transmit him safely and speedily into Egypt. The king answered, "There was a time when he could have done all this, and more, but that times were changed. Sennaar was in ruins, and was not like what it once was."

Several days having passed unsatisfactorily, Bruce was again summoned to the palace. "The king," he says, "told me that several of his wives were ill, and desired that I would give them my advice, which I promised to do without difficulty, as all acquaintance with the fair sex had hitherto been much to my advantage. I must confess, however, that calling these the fair sex is not preserving a precision in terms. I was admitted into a large square apartment, very ill-lighted, in which were about fifty women,

all perfectly black, without any covering but a very narrow piece of cotton rag about their waists. While I was musing whether or not these all might be queens, or whether there was any queen among them, one of them took me by the hand, and led me rudely enough into another apartment. This was much better lighted than the first. Upon a large bench or sofa, covered with blue Surat cloth, sat three persons clothed from the neck to the feet with blue cotton shirts.

“ One of these, who I found was the favourite, was about six feet high, and corpulent beyond all proportion. She seemed to me, next to the elephant and rhinoceros, the largest living creature I had ever met with. Her features were perfectly like those of a negro; a ring of gold passed through her underlip, and weighed it down, till, like a flap, it covered her chin, and left her teeth bare, which were very small and fine. The inside of her lip she had made black with antimony. Her ears reached down to her shoulders, and had the appearance of wings; she had in each of them a large ring of gold, somewhat smaller than a man's little finger, and about five inches in diameter. The weight of these had drawn down the hole where her ear was pierced so much, that three fingers might easily pass above the ring. She had a gold necklace, like what we used to call *esclavage*, of several rows, one below another, to which were hung rows of sequins pierced. She had on her ankles two manacles of gold, larger than any I had ever seen upon the feet of felons, with which I could not conceive it was possible for her to walk, but afterwards I found they were hollow. The others were dressed pretty much in the same manner; only there was one that had chains, which came from her ears to the outside of each nostril, where they were fastened. There was also a ring put through the

gristle of her nose, and which hung down to the opening of her mouth. I think she must have breathed with great difficulty. It had altogether something of the appearance of a horse's bridle. Upon my coming near them, the eldest put her hand to her mouth, and kissed it, saying, at the same time in very vulgar Arabic, 'Kifhalek howaja?' (How do you do, merchant)—I never in my life was more pleased with distant salutations than at this time. I answered, 'Peace be among you! I am a physician, and not a merchant.'

"I shall not entertain the reader with the multitude of their complaints; being a lady's physician, discretion and silence are my first duties. It is sufficient to say, that there was not one part of their whole bodies, inside and outside, in which some of them had not ailments. The three queens insisted upon being bled, which desire I complied with, as it was an operation that required short attendance; but, upon producing the lancets, their hearts failed them. They then all cried out for the Tabange, which, in Arabic, means a pistol; but what they meant by this word was, the cupping instrument, which goes off with a spring like the snap of a pistol. I had two of these with me, but not at that time in my pocket. I sent my servant home, however, to bring one, and, that same evening, performed the operation upon the three queens with great success. The room was overflowed with an effusion of royal blood, and the whole ended with their insisting upon my giving them the instrument itself, which I was obliged to do, after cupping two of their slaves before them, who had no complaints, merely to show them how the operation was to be performed."

When the "black spirits" of these queens had somewhat revived, the creatures naturally became a

little playful, and were exceedingly curious to inspect Bruce's skin.

“The only terms,” he says, “I could possibly, and that with great difficulty, make for myself were, that they should be contented to strip me no further than the shoulders and breast. Upon seeing the whiteness of my skin, they gave all a loud cry in token of dislike, and shuddered, seeming to consider it rather the effects of disease than natural. I think in my life I never felt so disagreeably. I have been in more than one battle, but surely I would joyfully have taken my chance again in any of them to have been freed from that examination. I could not help likewise reflecting that, if the king had come in during this exhibition, the consequence would either have been impaling, or stripping off that skin whose colour they were so curious about; indeed it was impossible to be more chagrined at, or more disgusted with, my present situation than I was; and the more so, that my delivery from it appeared to be very distant, and the circumstances were more and more unfavourable every day.”

During his tedious detention at Sennaar, Bruce occupied himself, as usual, in making celestial observations and inquiring into the history of the country, a great part of which he minutely relates.

“Nothing,” says Bruce, “is more pleasant than the country around Sennaar, in the end of August and beginning of September, I mean so far as the eye is concerned; instead of that barren, bare waste, which it appeared on our arrival in May, the corn now sprung up, and covering the ground, made the whole of this immense plain appear a level, green land, interspersed with great lakes of water, and ornamented at certain intervals with groups of villages, the conical tops of the houses presenting, at a dis-

tance, the appearance of small encampments. Through this immense, extensive plain winds the Nile, a delightful river there, above a mile broad, full to the very brim, but never overflowing. Everywhere on these banks are seen numerous herds of the most beautiful cattle of various kinds, the tribute recently extorted from the Arabs, who, freed from all their vexations, return home with the remainder of their flocks in peace, at as great a distance from the town, country, and their oppressors, as they possibly can.

“The banks of the Nile about Sennaar resemble the pleasantest parts of Holland in the summer season; but soon after, when the rains cease, and the sun exerts his utmost influence, the dora begins to ripen, the leaves to turn yellow and to rot, the lakes to putrify, smell, and be full of vermin, all this beauty suddenly disappears; bare scorched Nubia returns, and all its terrors of poisonous winds and moving sands, glowing and ventilated with sultry blasts, which are followed by a troop of terrible attendants, epilepsies, apoplexies, violent fevers, obstinate agues, and lingering, painful dysenteries, still more obstinate and mortal.

“War and treason seem to be the only employment of this horrid people, whom Heaven has separated, by almost impassable deserts, from the rest of mankind.”

To any one who will consider that Sennaar is only thirteen degrees from the line, it is scarcely necessary to observe that its heat is excessive, yet the natives bear it with astonishing ease; for on the 2nd of August, while Bruce was lying perfectly enervated in a room deluged with water, at noon, the thermometer being at one hundred and sixteen degrees, he saw several black labourers working without any appearance of being incommoded.

His observations on heat are so practical, and so

admirably expressed, that we give them in his own words:—"Cold and hot are terms merely relative, not determined by the latitude, but elevation of the place; when, therefore, we say hot, some other explanation is necessary concerning the place where we are, in order to give an adequate idea of the sensations of that heat upon the body, and the effects of it upon the lungs. The degree of the thermometer conveys this very imperfectly; ninety degrees is excessively hot at Loheia in Arabia Felix, and yet the latitude of Loheia is but fifteen degrees, whereas ninety degrees at Sennaar is, as to sense, only warm, although Sennaar, as we have said, is in latitude thirteen degrees.

"At Sennaar, then, I call it *cold*, when one, fully clothed and at rest, feels himself in want of fire. I call it *cool*, when one fully clothed and at rest feels he could bear more covering all over, or in part more than he has then on. I call it *temperate*, when a man, so clothed and at rest, feels no such want, and can take moderate exercise, such as walking about a room, without sweating. I call it *warm*, when a man, so clothed, does not sweat when at rest, but, upon moderate motion, sweats and again cools. I call it *hot*, when a man sweats at rest, and excessively on moderate motion. I call it *very hot*, when a man, with thin or little clothing, sweats much, though at rest. I call it *excessive hot*, when a man, in his shirt, at rest, sweats excessively, when all motion is painful, and the knees feel feeble as if after a fever. I call it *extreme hot*, when the strength fails, a disposition to faint comes on, a straitness is found in the temples, as if a small cord was drawn tight around the head, the voice impaired, the skin dry, and the head seems more than ordinary large and light."

If Bruce's enemies could but have been subjected to this last degree of temperature, they would, per-

haps, for once have agreed to admire the indefatigable exertions which, under such a climate, Bruce, in spite of ill health, continued to make. The history, ancient and modern, of the kingdom of Sennaar, its natural history, its trade, money, measures, diseases, &c. &c. were objects of his most eager inquiry; and it may truly be said, that his thirst for information seems actually to have increased with the heat and difficulties which oppressed him.

He made every exertion to leave Sennaar: in vain were represented to him the dangers which awaited him. "I persisted," says he, "in my resolution—I was tied to the stake. To fly was impossible; and I had often overcome such dangers by braving them;" but a new difficulty now arose. His funds were exhausted, and the person with whom he had credit refused to supply him. "This was a stroke," says Bruce, "that seemed to ensure our destruction, no other resource being now left. My servants began to murmur; some of them had known of my gold chain from the beginning, and these, in the common danger, imparted what they knew to the rest. In short, I resolved, though very unwillingly, not to sacrifice my own life, and that of my servants, and the finishing my travels, now so far advanced, to childish vanity. I determined, therefore, to abandon my gold chain, the honourable recompense of a day full of fatigue and danger.

"It was on the 5th of September," says Bruce, "that we were all prepared to leave this capital of Nubia, an inhospitable country from the beginning, and which, every day we continued in it, had engaged us in greater difficulties and dangers. We flattered ourselves, that, once disengaged from this bad step, the greatest part of our sufferings was over; for we apprehended nothing but from men, and, with very great reason, thought we had seen the worst of them."

CHAPTER XVI.

Bruce leaves Sennaar—Crosses the great Desert of Nubia—His Distress—Reaches Syene on the Nile.

ON the 8th of September, the camels were at last laden, and sent forwards to a small village, three or four miles from Sennaar. Bruce then finally settled his accounts, “and I received back,” he says, “six links, the miserable remains of one hundred and eighty-four, of which my noble chain once consisted.” Thus robbed, even of his hard-earned honour, a tinsel which no man breathing could more enthusiastically venerate, Bruce, after having been detained four months at Sennaar, proceeded once again on his journey towards his native land; and although he had so long been bending forwards towards the north, yet he had still to travel nearly seven hundred miles before he could even escape from that burning region of the earth—the torrid zone. His way was long—his path was beset with dangers; but the relentless persecution of a tropical sun is what no man can describe to another—every animal pants beneath it, and the very atmosphere they breathe trembles and shakes like air at the mouth of a furnace; however, onwards Bruce proceeded, and, about ten o’clock at night, he and his little party joyfully reached Soliman. Bruce now formally addressed his people; he recommended diligence, sobriety, and subordination; he assured them that, until the journey was terminated by good or bad success, they should share with him one common fare and one common fortune. Never was a discourse more gratefully re-

ceived. "Sennaar," says Bruce, "sat heavy upon all their spirits," and beyond description did they rejoice at having escaped from it.

Constantly advancing, they arrived on the 16th at Herbagi, a large, pleasant village; and Bruce immediately waited upon Wed Ageeb, an hereditary prince of the Arabs subject to the government of Sennaar. He had never before seen a European, and testified great surprise at Bruce's complexion. After resting two days at Herbagi, Bruce proceeded along the river. "Nothing," he says, "could be more beautiful than the country we passed that day, partly covered with very pleasant woods, and partly in lawns, with a few fine scattered trees." After travelling three days, they came, on the 21st, to the passage of the Nile, which river they crossed. The manner they pass the camels at this ferry is by fastening cords under their hind quarters, and then tying a halter to their heads. Two men sustain these cords, and a third the halter, so that the camels, by swimming, carry the boat on shore. One is fastened on each side of the stern, and one along each side of the stem. These useful beasts suffer much by this rude treatment, and many die in the passage, with all the care that can be taken, but they oftener perish through malice, or out of revenge; for the boatmen privately put salt in the camel's ears, which makes him desperate and ungovernable, till, by fretting and plunging his head constantly in the water, he loses his breath, and is drowned; the boatmen then have gained their object, and feast upon the flesh.

Having thus crossed the Nile, they proceeded to Halfaia, the limits of the tropical rains. A very important change was now about to take place in the character of the country, and Bruce, in bidding adieu to the wet portion of Africa, had to enter the

suburbs of the deserts. Here there are palm-trees, but no dates. The people eat cats, the hippopotamus, and the crocodile. Having remained at Halfaia a week, they set out on the 29th, and soon reached the village of Wed Hojila, where the great Bahar el Abiad, or White River, falls into the Bahar el Azergue, or Blue River; and here, with great frankness, Bruce acknowledges that the Abiad "*is larger than the Nile.*" "The Abiad," he says, "is a very deep river; it runs dead, and with little inclination, and preserves its stream always undiminished, because, rising in latitudes where there are continual rains, it, therefore, suffers not the decrease the Nile does by the six months' dry weather."

This confession certainly reflects great credit on Bruce's character, and it should surely silence those who have very unfairly insinuated that he always endeavoured to conceal the fact that the Bahar el Abiad was a much larger branch of the Nile than the Abyssinian river, the sources of which it had cost him so much to visit.

"At Halfaia," says Bruce, "begins that noble race of horses justly celebrated all over the world. They are the breed that was introduced here at the Saracen conquest, and have been preserved unmixed to this day. They seem to be a distinct animal from the Arabian horse, such as I have seen in the plains of Arabia Deserta, south of Palmyra and Damascus, where I take the most excellent of the Arabian breed to be, in the tribes of Mowalli and Annecy, which is about lat. 36°; whilst Dongola and the dry country near it seem to be the centre of excellence for this nobler animal.

"What figure the Nubian breed of horses would make, in point of fleetness, is very doubtful, their make being so entirely different from that of the

Arabian ; but if beautiful and symmetrical parts, great size and strength, the most agile, nervous, and elastic movements, great endurance of fatigue, docility of temper, and seeming attachment to man beyond any other domestic animal, can promise anything for a stallion, the Nubian is, above all comparison, the most eligible in the world. Few men have seen more horses, or more of the different places where they are excellent, than I have, and no one ever more delighted in them, as far as the manly exercise went. What these may produce for the turf is what I cannot so much as guess ; as there is not, I believe, in the world, one more indifferent to, or ignorant of, that amusement than I am. The experiment would be worth trying in any view : the expense would not be great."

All noble horses in Nubia are said to be descended from one of the five upon which Mahomet and his four immediate successors fled from Mecca to Medina on the night of the Hegira. The horses of Halfaia and Gherri are rather smaller than those of Dongola, few of which are less than sixteen hands.

After travelling along the Nile two days, Bruce reached Chendi or Chandi, a large village, the capital of its district—the government of which belonged to Sittina, which means "the mistress." She was the sister of Wed Ageeb, the principal of the Arabs in that part of Africa.

On the 12th of October, about a week after his arrival, Bruce waited upon Sittina, who received him behind a screen, so that it was impossible he could see either her figure or face. She expressed herself with great politeness, and wondered exceedingly how a white man should venture so far in such an ill-governed country. "Allow me, Madam," said Bruce, "to complain of a breach of hospitality in you, which

no Arab has been yet guilty of towards me." "Me!" said Sittina, "that would be strange indeed, to a man that bears my brother's letter. How can that be?" "Why, you tell me, Madam," said Bruce, "that I am a white man, by which I know that you see me, without giving me a like advantage. The queens of Sennaar did not use me so harshly; I had a full sight of them, without having used any importunity." Sittina burst into a fit of laughter, and desired Bruce to come to her next day.

"On the 13th," says Bruce, "it was so excessively hot that it was impossible to suffer the burning sun. The poisonous simoom blew as if it came from an oven. Our eyes were dim, our lips cracked, our knees tottering, our throats perfectly dry, and no relief was found from drinking an immoderate quantity of water. The people advised me to dip a sponge in vinegar and water, and hold it before my mouth and nose, and this greatly relieved me. In the evening I went to Sittina. Upon entering the house, a black slave laid hold of me by the hand, and placed me in a passage, at the end of which were two opposite doors. I did not well know the reason of this; but had stayed only a few minutes, when I heard one of the doors at the end of the passage open, and Sittina appeared magnificently dressed, with a kind of round cap of solid gold upon the crown of her head, all beat very thin, and hung round with sequins; with a variety of gold chains, solitaires, and necklaces of the same metal, about her neck. Her hair was plaited in ten or twelve small divisions like tails, which hung down below her waist, and over her was thrown a common cotton white garment. She had a purple silk stole, or scarf, hung very gracefully on her back, brought again round her waist, without covering her shoulders or arms.

“ Allow me, Madam,” said Bruce, suddenly kissing her hand, “ as a physician, to say one word.” Sittina bowed her head, and received Bruce in a private room. “ Are the women handsome in your country?” said Sittina. “ The handsomest in the world, Madam,” replied Bruce; “ but they are so good, and so excellent in all other respects, that nobody thinks at all of their beauty, nor do they value themselves upon it.” “ And do they allow you to kiss their hands?” said she. “ I understand you, Madam,” replied Bruce, “ though you have mistaken me. There is no familiarity in kissing hands—it is a mark of homage and distant respect paid in my country to our sovereigns, and to none earthly besides.” “ But do you know,” said Sittina, “ that no man ever kissed my hand but you?” “ It is impossible I should know that,” replied Bruce, “ nor is it material. Of this I am confident, it was meant respectfully, cannot hurt you, and ought not to offend you.”

Some days afterwards, as Bruce was sitting in his tent, musing upon the very unpromising aspect of his affairs, an Arab of very ordinary appearance, naked, with only a cotton cloth round his middle, came up to him, and offered to conduct him to Barbar, and thence to Egypt. He said his house was at Daroo, on the side of the Nile, about twenty miles beyond Syene, or Assouan, nearer Cairo. Bruce asked him why he had not gone with Mahomet Towash, who had lately set off. He said he did not like the company, and was very much mistaken if their journey would end well. On pressing him further if this was really the only reason, he confessed that he had contracted debt, had been obliged to pawn his clothes, and that his camel was detained for what still remained unpaid. After much conversation, Bruce found that Idris (for that

was his name) was a man of some substance in his own country, and had a daughter married to the Schourbatchie at Assouen. A bargain was accordingly made. Bruce redeemed the camel and cloak; and Idris agreed to show him the way to Egypt, where he was to be recompensed and rewarded according to his behaviour.

Bruce having secured this man as a guide, was now prepared to leave Shendi, but previous to his departure, he waited upon Sittina, to offer thanks for all her favours; for she had sent for Idris, had given him very positive instruction, mixed up with threats, and had also given Bruce general and useful letters. He, therefore, now begged he might be allowed to testify his gratitude by once again kissing her hand, to which she laughingly condescended, saying, "Well, you are an odd man! If Idris, my son, saw me just now, he would think me mad!"

It is curious, instructive, and amusing, to observe how admirably Bruce worms his way, by invariably bending before the tempest which assails him. He is bold and daring among the brave, resolute before tyrants, a physician to his friends, a magician before the rabble, and before the weaker sex (in these latitudes we should offend them were we to term them fair), he is always on his knee, respectfully kissing their hands, whether it is their custom or not.

After passing the small island of Kurgos, where Bruce saw the first ruins he had met with since those of Axum in Abyssinia, he travelled for five days, when he reached the ferry on the great river Tacazzé, Atbara, or Astaboras, which was about a quarter of a mile broad, and exceedingly deep. It was as clear as Bruce had seen it in Abyssinia, but its banks had lost their beauty, as it here flowed through a parched,

desert, barren country; still its water came from Abyssinia, a country yet fresh and dear in Bruce's recollection. "I reflected," he says, "with much satisfaction, upon the many circumstances the sight of this river recalled to my mind; but still the greatest was, that the scenes of these were now far distant, and that I was by so much more advanced towards home."

On the 26th, leaving the Nile about a mile on their left, they reached Goos, a very small village, which is, nevertheless, the capital of Barbar. Bruce and all his party here suffered from a disease in their eyes, caused by the simoom and the fine sand blowing through the desert. An unexpected misfortune now happened to Idris, who was arrested for debt, and carried to prison: "however," says Bruce, "as we were upon the very edge of the desert, and to see no other inhabited place till we should reach Egypt, I was not displeased to have it in my power to lay him under one other obligation before we trusted our lives in his hands, which we were immediately to do. I, therefore, paid his debt, and reconciled him with his creditors."

Bruce and his party having received all the assurances possible from Idris that he would live and die with them, boldly committed themselves to the desert. The party consisted of Ismael the Turk, two Greek servants besides Georgis, who was almost blind and useless, two Barbarins, who took care of the camels, Idris, and a young man, a relation of his; in all nine persons, eight only of whom were effective. They were all well armed with blunderbusses, swords, pistols, and double-barrelled guns, except Idris and his lad, who had lances, the only arms they could use. Five or six naked wretches of the Tucorory joined the party at the watering-place;

much against Bruce's will, for he knew that he should probably be reduced to the painful necessity of seeing them die of thirst before his eyes.

On the 9th of November, at noon, they left Goos for the sakia, or watering-place, which is near a little village called Hassa. At half past three in the afternoon, they came to the Nile to lay in a store of water. They filled four skins, which might contain altogether about a hogshead and a half. Their food consisted of twenty-two large goats' skins stuffed with a powder of bread made at Goos, on purpose for such expeditions. It required a whole day to fill the skins, and soak them well in the water, in order to make an experiment, which was of the greatest consequence, whether these skins were water-tight or not.

“While the camels were loading,” says Bruce, “I bathed, with infinite pleasure, for a long half hour in the Nile; and thus took leave of my old acquaintance, very doubtful if we should ever meet again.” They now left the Nile, and slowly entering, what may not unjustly be termed the gate of the great desert of Nubia, that valley, in the vegetable world, of the shadow of death, they came to a bare spot of fixed gravel, and of a very disagreeable whitish colour, mixed with small pieces of white marble, and pebbles like alabaster. At half-past eight, they stopped on a sandy plain without trees; they found the camels were too heavily laden, but they comforted themselves with the reflection that this would be remedied by the daily consumption of the provisions. The next day, after travelling six hours with great diligence, their misfortunes began, from a trifling circumstance which had not been attended to. Their shoes, which had long required repair, had become absolutely useless, their feet were much inflamed

from the burning sand, and the skin was rubbed off in several places. Close before them was Hambily, a small rock, which being, nevertheless, too large to be covered by the moving sands, is of the utmost importance to the caravans as a landmark.

On the 14th, early in the morning, they continued their journey, and after travelling about twenty-one miles, alighted among some acacia trees, at a place called Waadi el Halbout. "We were here," says Bruce, "at once surprised and terrified by a sight, surely one of the most magnificent in the world. In that vast expanse of desert, from W. and to N.W. of us, we saw a number of prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, at times moving with great celerity, at others stalking on with a majestic slowness; at intervals we thought they were coming in a very few minutes to overwhelm us; and small quantities of sand did actually, more than once, reach us. Again they would retreat so as to be almost out of sight, their tops reaching to the very clouds. There the tops often separated from their bodies; and these, once disjoined, dispersed in the air, and did not appear more. Sometimes they were broken near the middle, as if struck with a large cannon-shot. About noon they began to advance with considerable swiftness upon us, the wind being very strong at north. Eleven of them ranged alongside of us about the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest appeared to me at that distance as if it would measure ten feet. They retired from us with a wind at S.E. leaving an impression upon my mind to which I can give no name, though surely one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable deal of wonder and astonishment. It was in vain to think of flying; the swiftest horse, or fastest sailing ship, could be of no use to carry us out of this danger,

and the full persuasion of this riveted me as if to the spot where I stood, and let the camels gain on me so much in my state of lameness, that it was with some difficulty I could overtake them.

“This stupendous sight caused Idris to repeat his prayers, or rather incantations ; for, except the names of God and Mahomet, all the rest of his words were mere gibberish and nonsense. Ismael, the Turk, violently abused him for not praying in the words of the Koran, maintaining, with great apparent wisdom, that nothing else could stop these moving sands.”

They proceeded very slowly to-day, their feet being sore and greatly swelled. “The whole of our company,” says Bruce, “were much disheartened (except Idris), and imagined that they were advancing into whirlwinds of moving sand, from which they should never be able to extricate themselves ; but before four o’clock in the afternoon these phantoms of the plain had all of them fallen to the ground and disappeared.” In the evening they came to Waadi Dimokea, where they passed the night, much disheartened ; and their fear was not diminished on awaking in the morning, by finding that one side was perfectly buried in the sand that the wind had blown above them in the night.

From this day, subordination, though not entirely extinct, was rapidly declining ; all was discontent, murmuring, and fear. The water had greatly diminished, and that terrible death by thirst began to stare them in the face, owing, in a great measure, to their own imprudence. Ismael, who had been left sentinel over the skins of water, had slept so soundly that a Tucorory had opened one of the skins that had not been touched, in order to serve himself out of it at his own discretion ; however, hearing somebody stir, and fearing detection, he withdrew

himself as speedily as possible, without tying up the mouth of the girba, which was found in the morning with scarce a quart of water in it.

On the 15th the same moving pillars of sand presented themselves, only they seemed to be more in number, and less in size. They came several times in a direction close upon them. "They began," says Bruce, "immediately after sunrise, like a thick wood, and almost darkened the sun. His rays shining through them for near an hour, gave them an appearance of pillars of fire. Our people now became desperate; the Greeks shrieked out, and said it was the day of judgment. Ismael pronounced it to be hell, and the Tucorories, that the world was on fire. I asked Idris if ever he had before seen such a sight; he said he had often seen them as terrible, though never worse; but what he feared most was that extreme redness in the air, which was a sure presage of the coming of the simoom. I begged and entreated Idris that he would not say one word of that in the hearing of the people, for they had already felt it at Imhanzara in their way from Ras el Feel to Teawa, and again at the Acaba of Gerri, before we came to Chendi, and they were already nearly distracted at the apprehension of finding it here."

At half-past four o'clock in the afternoon they left Waadi Dell Aned. The sands scarcely showed themselves this day, and only at a great distance in the horizon. This was, however, a comfort but of short duration. Bruce observed that Idris took no notice of it, but warned him and the servants, that, upon the coming of the simoom, they should fall on their faces, with their mouths upon the earth, so as not to partake of the outward air as long as they could hold their breath. They alighted at six o'clock at a small rock, called Ras el Seah, or El Mout,

which signifies *death*. It is in the sandy ground, without trees or herbage, so that the poor camels fasted all that night.

On the 16th, at half-past ten in the forenoon, they left El Mout. "Our men," says Bruce, "if not gay, were, however, in better spirits than I had seen them since we left Goos. One of our Barbarins had even attempted a song; but Hagi Ismael very gravely reproved him, by telling him, that singing in such a situation was a tempting of Providence. There is, indeed, nothing more different than active and passive courage. Hagi Ismael would fight, but he had not strength of mind to suffer. At eleven o'clock, while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water, Idris cried out, with a loud voice, 'Fall upon your faces, for here is the simoom!' I saw from the south-east a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and it moved very rapidly, for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground, with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all lay flat on the ground, as if dead, till Idris told us it was blown over. The meteor, or purple haze, which I saw, was indeed passed, but the light air that still blew was of heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it, nor was I free of an asthmatic sensation till I had been some months in Italy at the baths of Poretta, near two years afterwards.

"An universal despondency had taken possession of our people. They ceased to speak to one another,

and when they did, it was in whispers, by which I easily guessed their discourse was not favourable to me, or else that they were increasing each other's fears, by vain suggestions calculated to sink each other's spirits still further, but from which no earthly good could possibly result. I called them together, and both reprimanded and exhorted them in the strongest manner I could. I bade them attend to me, who had nearly lost my voice by the simoom, and desired them to look at my face, so swelled as scarcely to permit me to see, my neck covered with blisters, my feet swelled and inflamed, and bleeding with many wounds. In answer to the lamentation that the water was exhausted, and that we were upon the point of dying with thirst, I ordered each man a gourd full of water more than he had the preceding day, and showed them, at no great distance, the bare black, and sharp point of the rock Chiggre, wherein was the well at which we were again to fill our girbas, and thereby banish the fear of dying by thirst in the desert. I believe I never was at any time more eloquent, and never had eloquence a more sudden effect. They all protested and declared their concern chiefly arose from the situation they saw me in; that they feared not death or hardship, provided I would submit to their direction in taking proper care of myself. They entreated me to use one of the camels, and throw off the load that it carried, that it would ease me of the wounds in my feet, by riding at least part of the day. This I positively refused to do, but recommended to them to be strong of heart, and to spare the camels for the last resource, if any should be taken ill and unable to walk any longer.

“This phenomenon of the simoom, unexpected by us, though foreseen by Idris, caused us all to relapse into our former despondency. It still continued to

blow, so as to exhaust us entirely, though the blast was so weak as scarcely would have raised a leaf from the ground. At twenty minutes before five the simoom ceased, and a comfortable and cooling breeze came by starts from the north, blowing five or six minutes at a time, and then falling calm. We were now come to the Acaba, the ascent before we arrived at Chiggre, where we intended to have stopped that night, but we all moved on with tacit consent, nor did one person pretend to say how far he guessed we were to go." At thirteen minutes past eight, they alighted in a sandy, barren plain, covered with loose stones. They were now only a quarter of a mile due north from the well, which is in the narrow gorge, forming the southern outlet of this small plain. Though they had travelled thirteen hours and a quarter this day, it was but at a slow pace, the wretched camels being famished, as well as tired, and lamed by the sharp stones with which the ground in all places was covered. The country, for three days past, had been destitute of herbage of any kind, entirely desert, and abandoned to moving sands; which, to use a scriptural phrase, "swept it with the besom of destruction."

Chiggre is a small narrow valley, about half way across the great desert of Nubia, and surrounded with barren rocks. The wells are ten in number, and the narrow gorge by which they are approached is not ten yards broad. The springs, however, are very abundant. Wherever a pit is dug five or six feet deep, it is immediately filled with water. The principal pool is about forty yards square and five feet deep; but the best-tasted water was in the cleft of a rock, about thirty yards higher, on the west side of this narrow outlet.

The rush of Bruce and his party to these wells is

beyond the power of description ; for no one would believe the effect which the sight of water produces on the human frame, unless he had himself experienced the burning thirst of the desert.

These wells were very foul, having been visited by animals of many descriptions. It was impossible to drink without putting a piece of a cotton girdle over the mouth, to keep out, by filtration, the filth of dead animals. Bruce saw a number of partridges on the face of the bare rock, but he did not dare to shoot at them, for fear of being heard by wandering Arabs that might be somewhere in the neighbourhood ; for Chiggre is a haunt of the Bishareen of the tribe of Abou Bertran, who, though they do not make it a station, because there is no pasture in the neighbourhood, nor can anything grow there, yet find it one of their most valuable places of refreshment, on account of the great quantity of water.

Bruce's first attention was to the camels, to whom he gave that day a double feed of dora, that they might drink sufficient for the rest of their journey, should the wells in the way prove scanty of water. He then bathed in a large pool of very cold water, in a cave covered with rock, and inaccessible to the sun in any direction. All the party seemed to be greatly refreshed by this refrigeration, excepting the Tucorory ; one of whom died about an hour after his arrival, and another early the next morning.

With the corpses of his companions at his side, with dangers of every sort before him, lame and exhausted, Bruce, as usual, deliberately unpacked his instruments to determine, notwithstanding the piercing glare of the sun, and the weakness of his eyes, the longitude and latitude of Chiggre. Every day at noon, he had described in a rough manner his course through the day. Carrying always a compass, with a needle of

five inches radius round his neck ; his ink was fixed to his girdle, and his notes were written on very long narrow strips of drawing paper cut for the purpose.

But subordination was now at an end, and Bruce had great difficulty in persuading his own servants to assist him in setting up his large quadrant, in order that he might determine the situation of the place.

On the 17th they left Chiggre. Ismael and Georgis, the blind Greek, had complained of shivering all night, and Bruce began to be very apprehensive that some violent fever was to follow. Their perspiration had not returned since their coming out of the cold water. The day, however, was insufferably hot, and their complaints insensibly vanished. A little before eleven they were again terrified by an army of sand pillars, whose march was constantly south. At one time a number of these pillars faced to the eastward, and seemed to be coming directly upon them : but Bruce began now to be reconciled to this phenomenon, and the magnificence of its appearance seemed, in some measure, to indemnify them for the panic it had first occasioned ; but it was otherwise with the simoom, for they all were firmly persuaded that another passage of that purple meteor would cause their deaths.

At half-past four they alighted in a vast plain, bounded on all sides by low sandy hills, which seemed to have been just created. These hillocks were from seven to thirteen feet high, drawn into perfect cones, with very sharp points, and well-proportioned bases. The sand was of an inconceivable fineness, having been the sport of hot winds for thousands of years. "There could be no doubt," says Bruce, "that the day before, when it was calm, and we suffered so much by the simoom between El Mout and Chiggre, the wind had been raising pillars of sand in this place, called Umdoom ; marks of the whirling motion of the pil-

lars were distinctly seen in every heap, so that here again, while we were repining at the simoom, Providence was busied keeping us out of the way of another scene, where, if we had advanced a day, we had all of us been involved in inevitable destruction."

On the 18th they left Umduom, at seven in the morning; their direction N. a little inclined to W.; at nine o'clock Idris pointed to some sandy hillocks, where the ground seemed to be more elevated than the rest; and he told Bruce that one of the largest caravans which ever came out of Egypt, was there buried with sand, to the number of some thousands of camels. At five o'clock in the evening they alighted at an Oasis, called Terfowey, full of trees and grass. As soon as they had chosen a proper place where the camels could feed, they unloaded the baggage, and sent the men to clean the well, and wait the filling of the skins. They then lighted a large fire, for the nights felt excessively cold, though the thermometer was at 53° ; and that cold occasioned Bruce inexpressible pain in his feet, which were now swelled to a monstrous size, inflamed, and excoriated. The camels were always fastened by the feet, and the chain secured by a padlock, lest they should wander in the night, or be liable to be stolen or carried off. While Bruce was occupied in deep thought, he heard the chain of the camels clink, as if somebody was unloosing them, and then, by the gleam of the fire, he distinctly saw a man pass swiftly by, stooping as he went along, his face almost close to the ground. A little time after this he heard another clink of the chain, as if from a sharp blow, and immediately after a movement among the camels. He instantly rose, and called out in a threatening tone in Arabic. Mahomet, Idris's nephew, hearing Bruce's voice, came running up from the well to see what was the matter.

They went down together to the camels, and, upon examination, found that the links of one of the chains had been broken, but the opening not large enough to let the whole link through. A hard blue stone was also driven through a link of one of the chains of another camel, and left sticking there, the chain not being entirely broken through; they saw, besides, the print of a man's feet on the sand; and they found that several articles belonging to the party had been stolen. This sufficiently showed the presence of hidden enemies.

“Our situation,” says Bruce, “was one of the most desperate that could be figured. We were in the middle of the most barren, inhospitable desert in the world, and it was with the utmost difficulty that, from day to day, we could carry wherewithal to assuage our thirst. We had with us the only bread it was possible to procure for some hundred miles; lances and swords were not necessary to destroy us; the bursting or tearing of a girba, the lameness or death of a camel, a thorn or sprain in the foot, which might disable us from walking, were as certain death to us as a shot from a cannon. There was no staying for one another; to lose time was to die, because, with the utmost exertion our camels could make, we scarce could carry along with us a scanty provision of bread and water sufficient to keep us alive.”

That desert, which did not afford inhabitants for the assistance or relief of travellers, contained, nevertheless, more than sufficient for destroying them, for large tribes of Arabs (two or three thousand encamped together) were cantoned, as it were, wherever there was water enough to supply their numerous herds of cattle, and Bruce fully expected that in the morning he should be attacked by these merciless robbers.

He, therefore, briefly addressed his people, who

uttered a great cry "God is great! let them come!" but when the day broke, no Arabs appeared; all was still; however, Bruce then took Ismael and two Barbarins along with him, to see who these neighbours could be. They soon traced in the sand the footsteps of the man who had been at their camels; and, following them behind the point of a rock, which seemed calculated for concealing thieves, they saw two ragged, old, dirty tents, pitched with grass cords.

The two Barbarins entered one of them, and found a naked woman there. "Ismael and I ran," says Bruce, "briskly into the largest, where we saw a man and a woman, both perfectly naked, frightful, emaciated figures, not like the inhabitants of this world. The man was partly sitting on his hams; a child, seemingly of the age to suck, was on a rag at the corner, and the woman looked as if she wished to hide herself. I sprang forward upon the man, and taking him by the hair of the head, pulled him upon his back on the floor, setting my foot upon his breast, and pointing my knife to his throat, I said to him sternly, 'If you mean to pray, pray quickly, for you have but this moment to live.' The fellow was so frightened, he scarce could beg us to spare his life; but the woman, as it afterwards appeared, the mother of the sucking child, did not seem to copy the passive disposition of her husband; she ran to the corner of the tent, where was an old lance, with which, I doubt not, she would have sufficiently distinguished herself, but it happened to be entangled with the cloth of the tent, and Ismael felled her to the ground with the butt-end of his blunderbuss, and wrested the lance from her. A violent howl was set up by the remaining woman, like the cries of those in torment. 'Tie them,' said I, 'Ismael; keep them separate, and carry them to the baggage, till

I settle accounts with this camel-stealer, and then you shall strike their three heads off, where they intended to leave us miserably to perish with hunger; but keep them separate.' While the Barbarins were tying the woman, the one that was the nurse of the child turned to her husband, and said, in a most mournful, despairing tone of voice, 'Did I not tell you, you would never thrive if you hurt that good man? did I not tell you this would happen for murdering the Aga?'"

After a long discussion with these people, many of Bruce's party were exceedingly desirous to kill them: and Hagi Ismael was so enraged, that he begged he might have the preference in cutting off one of their heads; but Bruce, animated by real Christian feelings, thus addressed his people. "It has appeared to me, that, often since we began this journey, we have been preserved by visible instances of God's protection, when we should have lost our lives, if we had gone by the rules of our own judgment only. We are, it is true, of different religions, but we all worship the same God; and, therefore, my determination is to spare the life even of this man, and I will oppose his being put to death by every means in my power,"

"It was easy to see," continues Bruce, "that fear of their own lives only, and not cruelty, was the reason they sought that of the Arab. They answered me, two or three of them at once, 'that it was all very well; what should they do? should they give themselves up to the Bishareen, and be murdered? was there any other way of escaping?' I will tell you, then," says Bruce, "since you ask me, what you should do: you shall follow the duty of self-defence and self-preservation, as far as you can do it without a crime. You shall leave the women and the child where they are, and with them the camels,

to give them and their child milk; you shall chain the husband's right hand to the left of some of yours, and you shall each of you take him by turns till we shall carry him into Egypt. Perhaps he knows the desert and the wells better than Idris; and if he should not, still we have two Hybeers instead of one; and who can foretell what may happen to Idris, more than to any other of us? But as he knows the stations of his people, and their courses at particular seasons, that day we meet one Bishareen, the man that is chained with him, and conducts him, shall instantly stab him to the heart, so that he shall not see, much less triumph, in the success of his treachery. On the contrary, if he is faithful, and informs Idris where the danger is, and where we are to avoid it, keeping us rather by scanty wells than abundant ones, on the day I arrive safely in Egypt, I will clothe him anew, as also his women, give him a good camel for himself, and a load of dora for them all. As for the camels we leave here, they are she ones, and necessary to give the women food. They are not lame, it is said; but we shall lame them in earnest, so that they shall not be able to carry a messenger to the Bishareen before they die with thirst in the way, both they and their riders, if they should attempt it."

Universal applause followed this speech; Idris, above all, expressed his warmest approbation. The man and the women were sent for, and had their sentence repeated to them. Having expected death, they all cheerfully subscribed to the conditions; and the woman declared she would as soon see her child die, as be the cause of any harm befalling them, and that, if a thousand Bishareen should pass, she well knew how to mislead them all, and that none of them should follow till they were far out of danger.

Bruce accordingly sent two Barbarins to lame the camels effectually, but not so as to injure them past recovery. After which, for the nurse and the child's sake, he took twelve handfuls of the bread which was their only food, and which indeed they could scarcely spare, and left it to this miserable family.

With these precautions, on the 20th, at eleven o'clock they left the well at Terfowey, after having warned the women, that their chance of seeing their husband again depended wholly upon his and their faithful conduct. They then took their prisoner with them, his right hand being chained to the left hand of one of the Barbarins. They had scarcely got into the plain, when they felt great symptoms of the simoom; and about a quarter before twelve, their prisoner first, and then Idris, cried out, "The simoom! the simoom!" "My curiosity," says Bruce, "would not suffer me to fall down without looking behind me. About due south, a little to the east, I saw the coloured haze as before. It seemed now to be rather less compressed, and to have with it a shade of blue. The edges of it were not defined as those of the former, but like a very thin smoke, with about a yard in the middle tinged with those colours. We all fell upon our faces, and the simoom passed with a gentle ruffling wind. It continued to blow in this manner till near three o'clock; so we were all taken ill that night, and scarcely strength was left us to load the camels and arrange the baggage. This day one of our camels died, partly famished, partly overcome with extreme fatigue; so that, incapable as we were of labour, we were obliged, for self-preservation's sake, to cut off thin slices of the fleshy part of the camel, and hang it in so many thongs upon the trees all night, and after upon the baggage, the sun drying it immediately, so as to prevent putrefaction."

At half past eight in the evening they alighted at a brackish well, called Naibey, in a bare sandy plain, where there were a few straggling acacia trees. They found near the well the corpse of a man and two camels; it was apparently long ago that this accident had happened, for the moisture of the camel was so exhaled, that it seemed to weigh but a very few pounds; no vermin had touched it, for in this whole desert there is neither worm, fly, nor anything that has in it the breath of life.

On the 21st, at six in the morning, having filled the girbas with water, they set out from Naibey. The first hour of the journey was through sharp-pointed rocks, which it was easy to foresee would very soon finish the camels. About eight, they had a view of the desert to the westward as before, and saw the sands had already begun to rise in immense twisted pillars, which darkened the heavens. The rising of these in the morning so early was a sure sign of a hot day, of a calm about mid-day, and of its being followed by two hours of the poisonous wind, which Bruce and his suffering companions dreaded more than any affliction that could assail them.

The moving sand was this day more magnificent than any they had yet seen. The sun shining through the pillars, which were thicker, and which contained more sand apparently than any of the preceding days, appeared as if spotted with stars of gold.

“The simoom,” says Bruce, “with the wind at south-east, immediately follows the wind at north, and the usual despondency that always accompanied it. The blue meteor, with which it began, passed over us about twelve, and the ruffling wind that followed it continued till near two. Silence, and a desperate kind of indifference about life, were the

immediate effect upon us ; and I began now, seeing the condition of my camels, to fear we were all doomed to a sandy grave, and to contemplate it with some degree of resignation. At half past eight in the evening we alighted in a sandy flat where there was great store of bent grass and trees, which had a considerable degree of verdure, a circumstance much in favour of our camels. We determined to stop here, to give them an opportunity of eating their fill where they could find it."

On the 22nd, at six o'clock, as they were crossing the sandy flat, one of the Tucorory was seized with frenzy or madness. He rolled upon the ground, moaned, and refused to continue his journey, or rise from where he lay. It was death to stop with him ; and each man, barely able to support his own sufferings, could not participate in those of others, the wretched maniac was therefore left to die in frenzy, among the thirsting sands, and under the scorching sun which had already deprived him of his reason. In the evening the party reached Umarack, where another of the camels died, completely worn out and exhausted.

" I here began," says Bruce, " to provide for the worst. I saw the fate of our camels approaching, and that our men grew weak in proportion ; our bread, too, began to fail us, although we had plenty of camel's flesh in its stead ; our water, though in all appearance we were to find it more frequently than in the beginning of our journey, was nevertheless brackish, and scarcely served the purpose to quench our thirst ; and, above all, the dreadful simoom had perfectly exhausted our strength, and brought upon us a degree of cowardice and languor that we struggled with in vain. I therefore, as the last effort, began to throw away everything weighty

I could spare, or what was not absolutely necessary, such as all shells, fossils, minerals, and petrifications, that I could get at, the counter-cases of my quadrant, telescopes, and clock, and several such like things.

“ Our camels were now reduced to five, and it did not seem that these were capable of continuing their journey much longer. In that case, no remedy remained, but that each man should carry his own water and provisions. Now, as no one man could carry the water he should use between well and well, and it was more than probable that distance would be doubled by some of the wells being found dry ; and if that was not the case, yet, as it was impossible for a man to carry his provisions who could not walk without any burden at all, our situations seemed to be most desperate.”

The Bishareen alone, existing in his native element, seemed to keep up his strength, and was in excellent spirits. He had attached himself in a particular manner to Bruce, and with a part of a very scanty rag, which he had round his waist, he had neatly made a wrapper, to defend Bruce's feet in the day, but the pain occasioned by the cold in the night was scarcely bearable. Bruce offered to free his left hand, which was chained to some one of the company night and day, but the man constantly refused, saying, “ Unchain my hands when you load and unload your camels ; but keep me to the end of the journey as you began with me : then I cannot misbehave, and lose the reward which you say you are to give me.”

Proceeding on their journey, they saw large strata of fossil salt everywhere upon the surface of the ground ; and this dismal scene was not enlivened by their finding the body of a man who had been mur-

dered, stripped naked, and was lying on his face unburied. A wound in the back sinew of his leg was apparent; he was, besides, thrust through the back with a lance, and had two wounds in the head with swords. During the whole of the next day they passed the bodies of the Tucorory, who had been scattered by the Bishareen, and left to perish with thirst there. In a small pool of water at which they now arrived, they found a small teal or widgeon. The Turk Ismael was preparing to shoot at it with his blunderbuss, but Bruce desired him to refrain, being desirous, by its flight, to endeavour to judge something of the nearness of the Nile; he, therefore, obliged it to take wing. The bird flew straight west, rising as he flew, a melancholy proof his journey was a long one, till, at last, being very high and at a distance, he vanished from their sight, without descending, or seeking to approach the earth; from which it was but too evident that the Nile was yet very distant.

This night Georgis and the Turk Ismael were both so ill, and so desponding, that they had resolved to pursue the journey no farther, but submit to their destiny, as they called it, and stay behind to die. It was with the utmost difficulty Bruce could persuade them to lay aside this resolution, and the next morning he promised they should ride by turns upon one of the camels, a thing that no one had yet attempted.

“After travelling for nearly three days,” says Bruce, “we had an unexpected entertainment, which filled our hearts with a very short-lived joy. The whole plain before us seemed thick-covered with green grass and yellow daisies. We advanced to the place with as much speed as our lame condition would suffer us; but how terrible was our disappointment

when we found the whole of that verdure to consist in senna and coloquintida, the most nauseous of plants, and the most incapable of being substituted as food for man or beast! We were now very near a crisis, one way or the other. Our bread was consumed, so that we had not sufficient for one day more; and though we had camel's flesh, yet, by living so long on bread and water, an invincible repugnance arose either to smell or taste it. As our camels were at their last gasp, we had taken so sparingly of water, that, when we came to divide it, we found it insufficient for our necessities, if Syene was even so near as we conceived it to be.

“Georgis had lost one eye, and was nearly blind in the other. Ismael and he had both become so stiff by being carried, that they could not bear to set their feet to the ground; and I may say for myself, that, though I had supported the wounds in my feet with a patience very uncommon, yet they were arrived at that height as to be perfectly intolerable, and, as I apprehended, on the point of mortification. The bandage, which the Bishareen had tied about the hollow of my foot, was now almost hidden by the flesh swelling over it. Three large wounds on the right foot and two on the left continued open, whence a quantity of lymph oozed continually. It was also with the utmost difficulty we could get out the rag, by cutting it to shreds with scissors. The tale is both unpleasant and irksome. Two soles which remained from our sandals, the upper leathers of which had gone to pieces in the sand near Goos, were tied with a cotton cloth very adroitly by the Bishareen. But it seemed impossible that I could walk farther even with his assistance, and, therefore, we determined to throw away the quadrant, telescopes, and timekeeper, and save our lives by riding

the camels alternately. But Providence had already decreed that we should not terminate this dangerous journey by our own ordinary foresight and contrivance, but owe it entirely to his visible support and interposition.

“ On the 27th, at half-past five in the morning, we attempted to raise our camels at Saffieha by every method that we could devise, but all in vain ; only one of them could get upon his legs, and that one did not stand two minutes till he kneeled down, and could never be raised afterwards. This the Arabs all declared to be the effects of cold ; and yet Fahrenheit’s thermometer, an hour before day, stood at forty-two degrees. Every way we turned ourselves death now stared us in the face. We had neither time nor strength to waste, nor provisions to support us. We then took the small skins that had contained our water, and filled them as far as we thought a man could carry them with ease ; but after all these shifts, there was not enough to serve us three days, at which I had estimated our journey to Syene, which still, however, was uncertain. Finding, therefore, the camels would not rise, we killed two of them, and took as much flesh as might serve for the deficiency of bread, and, from the stomach of each of the camels got about four gallons of water, which the Bishareen Arab managed with great dexterity.” It is well known that the camel has within him reservoirs, in which he can preserve water for a very considerable time. In those caravans of long journeys, which come from the Niger across the desert of Selima, it has been said that each camel lays in a store of water sufficient to support him for forty days. This statement is probably exaggerated ; but fourteen or sixteen days, it is well known, an ordinary camel will live though he hath no fresh supply of water ;

for when he eats, one constantly sees him throw from his repository mouthfuls of water to dilute his food ; and nature has contrived this vessel with such properties, that the water within it never putrefies, nor turns unwholesome."

The spirits of Bruce's companions now began completely to fail them. The miserable stock of black bread on which they had hitherto subsisted was nearly exhausted, and though they had extracted water from the carcasses or stomachs of the camels, and, like vampires, were thus sucking a horrid nourishment from the bodies of the dead, yet the difficulties which opposed them seemed greater than their strength, and they began to abandon even the hopes of ever getting out of the desert. "We were surrounded," says even Bruce, "amidst those terrible and unusual phenomena of nature which Providence, in mercy to the weakness of his creatures, has concealed far from their sight, in deserts almost inaccessible to them. Nothing but death was before our eyes; and, in these dreadful moments of pain, suffering, and despair, honour, instead of relieving me, suggested still what was to be an augmentation to my misfortune; the feeling this produced fell directly upon me alone, and every other individual of the company was unconscious of it.

"The drawings made at Palmyra and Baalbec for the king were, in many parts of them, not advanced farther than the outlines, which I had carried with me, that, if leisure or confinement should happen, I might finish them during my travels in the case of failure of other employment, so far at least, that, on my return through Italy, they might be in a state of receiving further improvement, which might carry them to that perfection I have since been enabled to

conduct them. These were all to be thrown away, with other not less valuable papers, and, with my quadrant, telescopes, and timekeeper, abandoned to the rude and ignorant hands of robbers, or to be buried in the sands. Every memorandum, every description, sketch, or observation since I departed from Badjoura and passed the desert to Cosseir, till I reached the present spot, were left in an undigested heap, with our carrion camels, at Saffieha, while there remained with me, in lieu of all my memoranda, but this mournful consideration, that I was now to maintain the reality of these my tedious perils, with those who either did, or might affect, from malice and envy, to doubt my veracity upon my ipse dixit alone, or abandon the reputation of the travels which I had made with so much courage, labour, danger, and difficulty, and which had been considered as desperate and impracticable to accomplish for more than 2000 years."

On the 28th, at half past seven in the morning, they left Waadi el Arab, and entered a narrow defile, with rugged but not high mountains on each side. About twelve o'clock they came to a few trees in the bed of a torrent. Ill as Bruce was, after refreshing himself with his last bread and water, he set out in the afternoon to gain a rising ground, that he might see, if possible, what was to the westward: for the mountains seemed now rocky and high like those of the Kennouss near Syene. He arrived, with great difficulty and pain, on the top of a moderate hill, but was exceedingly disappointed at not seeing the river to the westward; however, the vicinity of the Nile was very evident, by the high, uniform mountains that confine its torrent when it comes out of Nubia. The evening was still, so sitting down and covering

his eyes with his hands, not to be diverted by external objects, he listened and heard distinctly the noise of waters, which he supposed to be the cataract, although it seemed to the southward, as if he had passed it.

The party now proceeded, and for two days continued their course; but on the 28th, Bruce saw a flock of birds, which he recognised as belonging to the Nile. Satisfied that they should soon arrive at or below Syene, he returned to his companions; to whom he communicated this joyful news, which was confirmed by Idris. A cry of joy followed this annunciation. Christians, Moors, and Turks, all burst into floods of tears, kissing and embracing one another, and thanking one God for his infinite mercy in this deliverance.

On the 29th, at seven o'clock in the morning, they left Abou Seielat; at about nine, they saw before them the palm-trees of Assouan; and very shortly afterwards reached a grove of palm-trees on the north of that city.

In justice to Bruce's character, it is our duty to observe, what a weak imperfect idea we have given of the real fatigue of this journey to Assouan; for, however weary the reader may have been in the desert from which he has just emerged, however he may rejoice to quit the deep heavy sand, and once again to see the fresh-flowing waters of the Nile, yet in a short half hour, *he* has travelled from Gondar, a distance which it took *Bruce* eleven months to perform—twelve weeks of which were spent in coming from Sennaar to Syene. But it is not only utterly impossible to describe real sufferings and real dangers, but those who have undergone either soon find it impossible even to bring back an unfaded

picture to the mind; and of this there can be no greater proof, than the every day occurrence of people cheerfully returning to difficulties which, while actually felt, they had firmly resolved never again to encounter.

Giura il nocchier, che al mare
Non presterà più fede
Ma, se tranquillo il vede
Corre di nuovo al mar.

Di non trattar più l'armi
Giura il guerrier tal volta
Ma, se una tromba ascolta
Già non si sa fenar.

CHAPTER XVII.

Kind Reception at Assouan—Arrival at Cairo—Transactions with the Bey there—Lands at Marseilles.

WITHOUT congratulating each other on their escape and safe arrival, Bruce's companions with one accord ran to the Nile to drink; though, in the course of the journey, they had already seen the dreadful consequences of intemperance in drinking water. Bruce sat down under the shade of some palm-trees. It was very hot, and he fell into a profound sleep. But Hagi Ismael, who, neither sleepy nor thirsty, was exceedingly hungry, had gone into the town in search of food. He had not proceeded far before his green turban and ragged appearance struck some brother janissaries who met him; one of whom asked him what he was doing, and where he had come from? Ismael, in a violent passion, and broken Arabic, exclaimed, that he was a janissary of Cairo,—had come last from hell—and that he had walked through a desert of fire and flames.

The soldier, who heard him talk in this incoherent, raving tone, insisted that he should accompany him to the Aga—the very thing that Ismael wanted. He only desired time to acquaint his companions.—“Have you companions,” says the soldier, “from such a country?” “Companions!” says Ismael; “what the devil! do you imagine that I came this journey alone?” “Go,” says Ismael, “to the palm-trees, and when you find the tallest man you ever saw in your life, more

ragged and dirty than I am, call him Yagoube, and desire him to come along with you to the Aga."

The soldier obeyed, and accordingly found Bruce still reclining at the root of the palm-tree. "A dullness and insensibility," says Bruce, "an universal relaxation of spirits which I cannot describe, a kind of stupor or palsy of mind had overtaken me, almost to a deprivation of understanding. I found in myself a kind of stupidity, and want of power to reflect upon what had passed. I seemed to be as if awakened from a dream, when the senses are yet half asleep, and we only begin to doubt whether what has before passed in thought is real or not. The dangers that I was just now delivered from made no impression upon my mind; and what more and more convinces me I was for a time not in my perfect senses, is, that I found in myself a hard-heartedness, without the least inclination to be thankful for that signal deliverance which I had just now experienced."

From this stupor he was awakened by the arrival of the soldier, who cried out at some distance, "You must come to the Aga, to the castle, as fast as you can; the Turk is gone before you." "It will not be very fast, if we even should do that," said Bruce; "the Turk has ridden two days on a camel, and I have walked on foot, and do not know at present if I can walk at all." He then endeavoured to rise and stand upright, but it was with great pain and difficulty.

The Turk and Greeks were clothed no better than Bruce; Ismael and Michael had in their hands two monstrous blunderbusses, and the whole town crowded after them while they walked to the castle. The Aga was struck dumb on their entering the room, and observed to Bruce, that he thought him full a foot taller than any man he had ever seen in his life.

After a short conversation, the Aga asked for his letters and firman. Bruce told him, that he had left them with his baggage and dead camels at Saffieha, and he asked the favour of fresh camels that he might go and fetch his papers. "God forbid," said the Aga, "I should ever suffer you to do so mad an action! You are come hither by a thousand miracles, and after this, will you tempt God and go back? We shall take it for granted what those papers contain. You will have no need of a firman between this and Cairo." "I am," replied Bruce, "a servant of the king of England, travelling, by his order, and for my own and my countrymen's information; and I had rather risk my life twenty times, than lose the papers I had left in the desert." "Go in peace," said the Aga, "eat and sleep. Carry them," he said, speaking to his attendants, "to the house of the Schourbatchie."

They very shortly received from the Aga about fifty loaves of fine wheat bread, and several large dishes of dressed meat; but the smell of these last no sooner reached Bruce than he fainted, and fell upon the floor. He made several trials afterwards, with no better success, the first two days; for his stomach was so weakened by excessive heat and fatigue, that he could not reconcile himself to any sort of food but toasted bread and coffee.

After staying at Syene six days, Bruce obtained dromedaries, and, resolutely retracing his steps into the desert for forty miles, had at last the indescribable satisfaction to find his quadrant and the whole of his baggage. By them lay the bodies of the slaughtered camels, a small part of one of them having been torn by the haddaya, or kite.

Bruce now closed his travels through the desert by discharging the debts he had contracted in it. In order to recompense Idris Welled Hamran, the Hybeer,

for his faithful services, he made him choose for himself a good camel, clothed him, and gave him dresses for his two wives, with a load of dora. The poor fellow, thus enriched, departed with tears in his eyes, offering to go back and deliver up what Bruce had given him to his family, and return and follow him as a servant wherever he should go. But Bruce had no longer any occasion for his services; indeed he could have well reached Syene without him, yet, had any accident happened in the desert to his other guide, his prudent precaution in securing this man would have become very evident. But it was his system always to provide for accidents, and it was by this sensible conduct, as well as by his intimate knowledge of human nature, that he had managed to reach Syene in safety.

To raise Bruce's character by trampling on the reputation of his fellow-travellers would be an unworthy jealousy, in which we should be very sorry to indulge; yet the proper mode of penetrating Africa is a problem of such vital importance to those who may hereafter attempt it, that we will not refrain from observing what a very remarkable difference there is between the manner in which Bruce and Burckhardt travelled between Egypt and Nubia. The former possessed the magic art of commanding respect, and his behaviour and the treatment which he received, it is not necessary to recapitulate.

Burckhardt's resolution was unconquerable, and his patience in the desert was almost equal to that of the camel. Science had never a more faithful servant, but he neglected to seek information by giving it, and the disguise under which he travelled concealed not only his person but his mind. All civilised men, from the philosopher down to the mountebank, carry with them funds either of instruction or amusement,

and the old fable of the basket-maker explains how possible it is for any one to make himself, at least, useful to uncivilised tribes; but of these funds Burekhardt did not avail himself, and a few extracts from his travels will show the consequences.

“I gave out,” he says, “I was in search of a cousin.” —“The son of my old friend of Daraoa, to whom I had been most particularly recommended by his father, went so far as once to spit in my face in the public market-place.” “Indeed, I never met any of these Egyptians in the streets without receiving some insulting language from them, of which had I taken notice, they would, no doubt, have carried me before the Mek.” “One of the slaves of Edris, to whom I had already made some little presents, tore my shirt to pieces, because I refused to give it to him.” “Called me boy.” “I cooked my own victuals.” “Was pelted with stones.” “I was often driven from the coolest and most comfortable berth into the burning sun, and generally passed the mid-day hour in great distress.” “I was afraid to take any notes.” “I hid myself to do it,” &c. &c. &c. . . .

On the 11th of December Bruce embarked at Syene, and without masts being shipped, or any sails being set, the vessel or canja floated down the Nile.

There is no greater trial to the constitution than the sudden change from an active to a sedentary life: the human frame seems made for adversity; and in the army it has been constantly remarked, that troops which have been long exposed to a bivouac, become unhealthy as soon as they go into quarters.

“On the 10th of January, 1773, we arrived,” says Bruce, “at the convent of St. George, at Cairo—all of us, as I thought, worse in health and spirits than the day we came out of the desert. Nobody knew

us at the convent, either by our face or our language, and it was by a kind of force that we entered. Ismael and the Copht went straight to the Bey ; and I, with great difficulty, had interest enough to send to the patriarch and my merchants at Cairo, by employing the only two piastres I had in my pocket. It was half by violence that we got admittance into the convent. But this difficulty was to be but of short duration : the morning was to end it, and give us a sight of our friends, and in the mean time we were to sleep soundly."

Bruce had scarcely enjoyed an hour's repose, when he was awakened by a number of strange voices which called upon him to come immediately before the Bey, but he insisted on being allowed a few moments to arrange his toilet.

"I had no shirt on," he says, "nor had I been master of one for fourteen months past. I had a waistcoat of coarse, brown, woollen blanket, trowsers of the same, and an upper blanket of the same wrapt about me, and in these I was lying. I had cut off my long beard at Furshoot, but still wore prodigious mustachios. I had a thin, white muslin cloth round a red Turkish cap, which served me for a night-cap, a girdle of coarse woollen cloth that wrapt round my waist eight or ten times, and swaddled me up from the middle to the pit of my stomach, but without either shoes or stockings. In the left of my girdle I had two English pistols mounted with silver ; and, on the right hand, a common crooked Abyssinian knife, with a handle of rhinoceros horn. Thus equipped, I was ushered by the banditti, in a dark and very windy night, to the door of the convent."

The Sarach, or commander of the party, rode on a mule, and, as a mark of extreme consideration, he had brought an ass for Bruce, the only animal that

a Christian was suffered to ride on in Cairo. As the beast had no saddle nor stirrups, Bruce's feet would have touched the ground, had he not held them up, which he did with the utmost pain and difficulty, as they were inflamed and dreadfully sore, from the march in the desert. "Nobody," says Bruce, "can ever know, from a more particular description, the hundredth part of the pain I suffered that night. I was happy that it was all external. I had hardened my heart; it was strong, vigorous, and whole, from the near prospect I had of leaving this most accursed country, and being again restored to the conversation of men."

He was now introduced to Mahomet Bey. Two large sofas, furnished with cushions, took up a great part of a spacious saloon. They were of the richest crimson and gold, excepting a small yellow and gold one like a pillow, upon which the Bey was leaning, supporting his head with his left hand, and sitting in the corner of the two sofas. Though it was late, he was in full dress; his girdle, turban, and handle of his dagger, all shining with the finest brilliants, and a magnificent sprig of diamonds was in his turban. "The rooms," says Bruce, "were light as day with a number of wax torches, or candles. I found myself humbled at the sight of so much greatness and affluence. My bare feet were so dirty, I had a scruple to set them upon the rich Persian carpets with which the whole floor was covered; and the pain that walking at all occasioned gave me altogether so crouching and cringing a look, that the Bey, upon seeing me come in, cried out, 'What's that? Who is that? From whence is he come?' His secretary told him, and immediately upon that I said to him in Arabic, with a low bow, 'Mahomet Bey, I am Yagoube, an Englishman; very unfit to appear before you in the

condition I am, having been forced out of my bed by your soldiers in the middle of the only sound sleep I have had for many years.’”

After a short conversation, Bruce showed the Bey the dreadful state of his feet—the effect, he told him, of passing the desert. He immediately desired him to sit down on the cushion. “It is the coldness of the night, and hanging upon the ass,” said Bruce, “which occasions this—the pain will be over presently.” Bruce soon left the Bey, and was accompanied by a slave, who presented to him a basket of oranges, which he said were given by order of the Bey.

“In that country,” says Bruce, “it is not the value of the present, but the character and power of the person that sends it, that creates the value; twenty thousand men that slept in Cairo that night would have thought the day the Bey gave them, at an audience, the worst orange in that basket, the happiest one in their life. It is a mark of friendship and protection, and the best of all assurances. Well accustomed to ceremonies of this kind, I took a single orange, bowing low to the man that gave it me, who whispered me, ‘Put your hand to the bottom, the best fruit is there; the whole is for you—it is from the Bey.’ A purse was exceedingly visible. I lifted it out; there were a considerable number of sequins in it; I put it in my mouth, kissed it, and said to the young man, ‘This is indeed the best fruit, at least commonly thought so, but it is forbidden fruit for me. The Bey’s protection and favour are more agreeable to me than a thousand such purses would be.’”

The servant showed prodigious surprise. Nothing appears more incredible to a Turk, whatever his rank may be, than that any man should refuse money!

The slave, therefore, insisted that Bruce should return to the Bey, who, having heard of his behaviour, observed, that it was evident, from his dress and appearance, he was in want of money. "Sir," said Bruce (who had a very important object, which he was desirous to gain), "may I beg leave to say two words to you? There is not a man, to whom you ever gave money, more grateful, or more sensible of your generosity, than I am at present. The reason of my waiting upon you in this dress was, because it is only a few hours ago since I left the boat. I am not, however, a needy man, or one that is distressed for money: that being the case, and as you have already my prayers for your charity, I would not deprive you of those of the widow and the orphan, whom that money may very materially relieve. Julian and Rosa, the first house in Cairo, will furnish me with what money I require; besides, I am in the service of the greatest king in Europe, who would not fail to supply me abundantly if my necessities required it, as I am travelling for his service." "This being so," said the Bey, with great looks of complacency, "what is it in my power to do for you? You are a stranger now where I command; you are my father's stranger likewise, and this is a double obligation upon me: what shall I do?" "There are," said I, "things that you could do, and you only, if it were not too great presumption for me to name them." "By no means; if I can, I will do it; if not, I will tell you so."

Bruce saw, by the Bey's manner of speaking, that he had risen considerably in character in his opinion since his refusal of the money. "I have, Sir," said Bruce, "a number of countrymen, brave, rich, and honest, that trade in India, where my king has great

dominions. Now there are many of these that come to Jidda. I left there eleven large ships belonging to them, who, according to treaty, pay high duties to the custom-house, and, from the dictates of their own generosity and munificence, give large presents to the prince and to his servants for protection; but the Sherriffe of Mecca has of late laid duty upon duty, and extortion upon extortion, till the English are at the point of giving up the trade altogether." Bruce had two other audiences with Mahomet Bey on this important subject, and, faithful to the interests of his country, he at last succeeded in concluding an agreement in favour of the English merchants, by which, instead of paying fourteen per cent., and an enormous present, the Bey agreed to be satisfied with eight per cent., and no present at all; and at his own expense he had the pleasure of sending the following firman to Mocha:—

Translation of the Firman procured by Mr. Bruce from Mahommed Bey Aboudahab, for the East India Company. 1773.

“ We give thanks to the God of the whole world, wishing a good end to those who have good conduct, and the contrary to the unjust. God shall salute the most famous among his creatures, and his followers. Next, let this order be obeyed with the assistance of God in all parts, which is written from the Divan of Cairo the fortified, and which contains an agreement with the esteemed Captains and Christian merchants, who are famed for their honesty: may they have a good end! Be it known to you all, as many of you as this reaches, that the honoured Yagoube el Hakim has come to us, and has given us to understand the injustice commonly practised by his majesty the Sherriffe of Mecca, and by his

dependants in the place of Jidda, and that you wish to come into the port of Suez, but want security. It is very agreeable that you should enjoy this in the time of our king*, servant of the two holy places, and lord of the two lands and the two seas; may God always give him strength and victory! I make you sure, therefore, that you may come to Suez with your ships, with good profit, under the shadow of God and of our Prophet, and under our own both far and near; and that you shall not be molested, neither by us nor our servants, our soldiers nor our subjects; and that you shall not pay aught but eight per cent. of the said merchandise, or its value; and fifty pataka for each ship to the commandant of Suez, in name of anchorage; and that you may come to Cairo itself, and trade for money or barter, as suits you best, without restraint from any one; and if it suits you better to trade at Suez, we will order the merchants thither, without any body's incommoding or troubling you. So you shall have repose more than you desired; and these promises are good and binding, and will not be changed to the contrary, so that you shall not pay any other expenses to us or to our soldiers. And may the blessing of God rest on him that follows the right way! The 15th of the month Zilkaade, 1186 (February, 1773)."

Mahomet Bey being about to leave Cairo to visit his father-in-law in Syria, now pressed Bruce very much to accompany him, but he naturally enough says, "I was sufficiently cured of any more Don Quixote undertakings." He, therefore, proceeded to Alexandria, where he arrived the beginning of March. With as little delay as possible he embarked and sailed on board a small vessel, the crew

* The Grand Seigneur.

of which, during some heavy weather, proposed to throw his baggage overboard, conceiving that such large cases contained dead men, which all sailors consider as unlucky guests. However, Bruce manfully protected his hard-earned treasure, and, after a tedious passage of three weeks, landed safely at Marseilles.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Bruce returns to Europe—Visits Paris, Italy—Returns to England—Quarrels with the Garret-writers of the Day—Retires to Scotland—Marries—At last publishes his Travels—The Incredulity of the Credulous—Bruce's Disappointment—Sorrow—Death.

“Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
 Who never to himself has said,
 This is my own, my native land!
 Whose heart has ne'er within him burn'd,
 As HOME his footsteps he has turn'd,
 From wandering on a foreign strand?”

BUT although “home is home, though ever so homely,” yet in the human mind there is no idea more indefinite than that which circumscribes the precise limits of our “home;” for, according to circumstances, it dilates and contracts like the pupil of the eye.

The European who has long sojourned and travelled under the constellations of the southern hemisphere, feels that he is “at home,” when, from the neighbourhood of the Line, he first sees his old friend the north star rising above the horizon. To this man, home is for a moment the hemisphere in which he was born. Our own country, our own county, our own parish, our own house, our own room, are homes of different dimensions; and regardless of all these, the sailor-boy has often felt that *he* is not really “at home” till he is once again in his mother's arms.

Bruce considered himself “at home” as soon as he landed at Marseilles; and we have deemed the above

observations necessary to account for the time which will yet elapse before he actually revisits his native land.

The Comte de Buffon, M. Guys and many others, who had taken a particular interest in his travels, came to congratulate him on his return, and to listen to his adventures and discoveries. From their honourable friendship, and in their liberal society, Bruce for a short time enjoyed that refined intellectual happiness which is only known in civilised life. However, his health was much impaired, and for five-and-thirty days he suffered very great agony from a worm called faranteit, which had planted itself in his leg below the knee. This worm is supposed by the Arabs to afflict those who have been in the habit of drinking stagnant water, and their mode of extracting it is by seizing it gently by the head, and then gradually winding it round a feather. Bruce had tried this plan, but from the unskilfulness of his attendant the worm was broken, and such severe inflammation ensued, that the surgeon advised him to submit to amputation; "but," says Bruce, "to limp through the remains of life, after having escaped so many dangers, was hard,—so much so, that the loss of life itself seemed more desirable." However, the inflammation was at last lowered, though it did not entirely terminate for nearly a year after his arrival in Europe; and as soon as his health was sufficiently restored, he set out for Paris, accompanied by the Comte de Buffon.

The reception he met with in that metropolis was exceedingly flattering. His travels became the subject of general conversation, and his company was courted by people of learning and of rank.

As an acknowledgment of the favours which he had received from the French nation during the early

part of his travels, Bruce presented to the Royal Library a copy of the Prophecies of Enoch, a literary curiosity of great value. He also sent to the king's garden at Paris some of the seeds of rare plants which he had collected in Abyssinia.

In July he left Paris for Italy. He was desirous to try the baths of Poretta; and although he was naturally anxious to revisit Scotland, his native country, yet he had still stronger inclination to complete his drawings of Africa, for which he required leisure, with the advice and assistance of professional men. He had also another reason, which, however absurd and unjustifiable, yet made him obstinately determine, against the advice of all his friends, to proceed to Italy. Before Bruce was consul at Algiers, he had fallen in love with a Scotch lady, to whom he had engaged himself by a promise of marriage. On the banks of the Nile, on the waters of the Red Sea, amongst the mountains of Abyssinia, and in the burning desert of Nubia, Bruce's heart had remained faithful to his engagement—the charming vision was constantly before him. At the “hillock of green sod” the reader will remember he insisted that Strates should drink to the health of MARIA! and he had at last hastened homewards, hoping to grasp this lovely substance instead of its tantalising shadow. However, on his arrival at Marseilles, he found that the lady had so far forgotten him, that she was at Rome, very comfortably married to the Marchese d'Accoramboni.

Accustomed to tyrannise, there is nothing that Cupid knows less about than law. Sorely disappointed, his feelings highly irritated, his leg still itching from the farenteit, gaunt, weatherbeaten, sunburnt, and in stature six feet four inches good English measure, Bruce suddenly appeared at Rome

before Filippo Accoramboni, to desire that he would apologise in writing for having married a lady who had been engaged to him. The Italian marquis, seeing no good reason for fighting with such a man, politely assured him he would not have married the lady had he known she was engaged to him; but Bruce most unreasonably insisted that this declaration should be expressed in writing, which the marquis very properly declined, upon which Bruce instantly sent him the following letter:—

Mr. Bruce to Signor Accoramboni.

“SIR,—Not my heart, but the entreaties of my friends, made me offer you the alternative by the Abbé Grant. It was not for such satisfaction, that sick, and covered with wounds, I have traversed so much land and sea to find you.

“An innocent man, employed in the service of my country—without any provocation or injury from me, you have deprived me of my honour, by violating all the most sacred rights before God and man; and you now refuse to commit to writing what you willingly confess in words. A man of honour and innocence, Marquis, knows no such shifts as these; and it will be well for one of us to-day, if you had been as scrupulous in doing an injury as you are in repairing it.

“I am at least your equal, Marquis; and God alone can do me justice for the injury which you have done me. Full of innocence, and with a clear conscience, I commit my revenge to Him; and I now draw my sword against you with that confidence, with which the reflection of having done my duty, and the sense of the injustice and violence which I have suffered from you, without any reason, inspire me.

“At half-past nine (French reckoning), I come in

my carriage to your gate; if my carriage does not please you, let your own be ready. Let us go together to determine which of the two is the most easy, to offer an affront to an absent man, or to maintain it in his presence.

“ I have the honour to be,
your humble servant,
JAMES BRUCE.”

This “ kill him and eat him ” sort of epistle came upon the Marchese like the simoom. It was impossible to stand against it, and there was nothing left for him but to throw himself, as Bruce did in the desert, *faccia à terra*, upon the ground. He, therefore, forwarded to Bruce the following reply:—

Sign. Accoramboni to Mr. Bruce.

“ SIR,—When the marriage with Miss M., at present my wife, was contracted, it was never mentioned to me that there was a previous promise made to you, otherwise that connexion should not have taken place.

“ With respect to yourself, on my honour, I have never spoken of you in any manner, your person not having been known to me. If, therefore, I can serve you, command me. With the profoundest respect, I sign myself,

“ Your most humble and *obliged* servant,
FILIPPO ACCORAMBONI.

Al. Sig. Cavaliere Janne Bruce.”

This silly affair being concluded, Bruce remained some months at Rome. From the nobility, as well as from his countrymen who were there, he received marks of very particular attention; and Pope Clement XIV., the celebrated Ganganelli, presented him with a series of gold medals, relating to several

transactions of his pontificate. In the spring of 1774, Bruce returned to France, where he resided till the middle of June, when he left Paris, and very shortly afterwards arrived in England, after an absence of twelve years. The public was naturally impatient to hear his adventures, and all people of distinction and learning appeared equally desirous to seek his acquaintance. He was introduced at court, and graciously received by his Majesty George III., who was pleased not only to accept his drawings* of Baalbec, Palmyra, and the African cities, but to express his high approbation of the very great exertions which Bruce had made, in order to extend the geographical knowledge of this our earth.

“When I first came home,” says Bruce, “it was with great pleasure, I gratified the curiosity of the whole world, by showing them each what they fancied most curious. I thought this was an office of humanity to young people, and to those of slender fortunes, or those who, from other causes, had no opportunity of travelling. I made it a particular duty to attend and explain to men of knowledge and learning, that were foreigners, everything that was worth the time they bestowed upon considering the different articles that were new to them, and this I did at great length to the Count de Buffon, and Mons. Gueneau de

* A great deal has been written and said against Bruce for having presented to the king, *as his own performance*, these drawings, which it has been very illiberally assumed were the productions of Balugani, his Italian clerk. But even admitting that Balugani had held the pencil, yet we submit that Bruce was fully entitled to present them to his Majesty and to his country *as his own productions*. They were not works of genius or imagination, but architectural drawings, the plan and elevation of which were regularly shown by a scale annexed. Their value was their minute accuracy; their merit consisted in the danger and difficulty with which such details had been procured for science and literature.

Montbeliard, and the very amiable and accomplished Madame d'Aubenton. I cannot say by whose industry, but it was in consequence of this friendly communication, a list or inventory (for they could give no more) of all my birds and beasts was published before I was well got to England."

Frank and open in society, Bruce, in describing his adventures, generally related those circumstances which he thought were most likely to amuse people by the contrast they afforded to the European fashions, customs, and follies of the day.

Conscious of his own integrity, and not suspecting that in a civilised country the statements of a man of honour would be disbelieved, he did not think it necessary gradually and cautiously to prepare his hearers for a climate and scenery altogether different from their own, but, as if from a balloon, he at once landed them in Abyssinia, and suddenly showed them a vivid picture to which he himself had been long accustomed. They had asked for novelty; in complying with their request, he gave them good measure, and told them of people who wore rings in their lips instead of their ears—who anointed themselves not with bear's grease or pomatum, but with the blood of cows—who, instead of playing tunes upon them, wore the entrails of animals as ornaments—and who, instead of eating hot putrid meat, licked their lips over bleeding living flesh. He described debauchery dreadfully disgusting, because it was so different from their own.—He told them of men who hunted each other—of mothers who had not seen ten winters—and he described crowds of human beings and huge animals retreating in terror before an army of little flies! In short, he told them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; but the mind of man, like his stomach, can only

contain a certain quantity, and the dose which Bruce gave to his hearers was more than they had power to retain.

The facts he related were too strong—they required to be diluted, and this base office Bruce haughtily refused to perform; he had given them plain wholesome food—he did not profess to give them digestion.

At that time (to say nothing about the present day), the English public indolently allowed itself, with regard to particular regions of the world, to be led and misled by a party of individuals—who dogmatically dictated what idle theory was to be believed, and what solid information was to be disbelieved. These brazen images Bruce refused to worship. In their presence he maintained his statements,—they frowned upon him with pompous incredulity. With just indignation, he sneered at their garret-life—their port-wine opinions: they knew their power—and fancying that, like buffaloes, their strength lay in their heads, they deliberately herded together to run him down.

“There has not,” says Dr. Clark (who travelled in three quarters of the globe, and who at Cairo had an opportunity of corroborating Bruce’s statements), —“there has not been an example in the annals of literature, of more unfair and disgraceful hostility than that which an intolerant and invidious party too successfully levelled during a considerable time against the writings of Bruce.”

“I will venture to assert,” says Belzoni, “that the only reason why such doubts could have been started respecting his (Bruce’s) work, was the spirit of contradiction excited by the illiberality of travellers, and those who were no travellers: the former, because they had not power to resist jealousy, which, in spite

of all their efforts to conceal it, shows itself through the veil of their pretended liberality and impartiality ; and the latter, because they are unable to controul their bad propensity to dispute and condemn every thing they have no knowledge of."

"It was the misfortune of that traveller (Bruce) who is now no more," says Dr. Russel, in his history of Aleppo, "to have known that his veracity had too often captiously, and sometimes capriciously, been called in question, owing, besides the nature of his adventures, partly, I believe, to a certain manner in conversing as well as in writing, which alienated many who were less than himself disposed to take offence. He is now beyond the reach of flattery or humiliation ; and I trust it will not be imputed merely to the partiality of friendship, if, as a small but just tribute to his memory, I repeat here what I have often before asserted in occasional conversation, that however I might regret a constitutional irritability of temper, so injurious to its owner, or however I might wish to have seen him at times condescend to explanations which I have reason to think would have removed prejudices, I never, either in course of our acquaintance, or in the perusal of his book, found myself disposed to suspect him of any intentional deviation from the truth" (p. 423).

As soon as Bruce found that in England public opinion was against him, in sullen indignation he determined to retire into his own country ; for although all ranks of people were evidently amused with his adventures, yet, as soon as he perceived that they doubted his facts, his mind was too just, and his spirit too proud, to accept a smile as an atonement for a barbarous prejudice and an unjustifiable insult. Determined in no way to compromise his own honour, he felt that he had better quit

England, and that, under the storm which assailed him, there was "no place like home!"

In the autumn, he accordingly went to the capital of Scotland, where he was received with that affectionate attention and regard which, as Englishmen, we must admit that the Scotch have been always ready to pay to any one among them who has reflected credit and honour upon their country.

From Edinburgh he proceeded to Kinnaird, where he rebuilt his house, and for some time occupied himself in arranging his estate, which, during his long absence, had not only fallen into agricultural disorder, but had also become involved in legal difficulties.

For more than a year and a half he was thus employed, enjoying the little bustle and arrangements which diverted his mind from the subject which most naturally and severely oppressed it.

On the 20th of March, 1776, he married Mary Dundas, daughter of Thomas Dundas, Esq., of Fingask, and Lady Janet Maitland, daughter of the Earl of Lauderdale. This amiable and accomplished person was much younger than Bruce; and it is rather a singular coincidence, that she was born the same year in which his first wife had died.

For some time after his return to Scotland, Bruce kept up a correspondence with his friends in France, but after his marriage he had little intercourse with literary people.

In the shooting season he generally spent some time at a place called Ardwhillery, in the Highlands, and there, as well as at Kinnaird, he amused himself by translating the Prophecies of Enoch from the Abyssinian. He also made a slow progress in transcribing and arranging his journals, but happy in his own domestic circle, and conscious that he had been

a faithful servant to his country, he seemed to prefer repose to the vexation of laying his travels before the public.

Always fond of astronomy, from which he had derived so much practical assistance, he erected, on the top of his house at Kinnaird, a temporary observatory: and, dressed in an Abyssinian costume, wearing even the turban, he occasionally enjoyed very natural and delightful reflections in looking, from a peaceful, tranquil, and civilised country, upon constellations in the heavens, which he had so often gazed upon in moments of danger and privation; but a man's notions seldom fit his neighbours' brain, and, "Eh! the Laird's gaen daft!" was the opinion which the country people of Kinnaird secretly expressed among themselves at Bruce's astronomical occupations.

After having enjoyed nearly twelve years of quiet domestic happiness, Bruce lost his wife. She died in 1785, leaving him two children, a son and daughter. Thus deprived of his best friend and companion, he again became restless and melancholy. "The love of solitude," he very justly says, "is the constant follower of affliction. This again naturally turns an instructed mind to study." These feelings Bruce's friends strongly encouraged, and they used every endeavour to rouse him from his melancholy, and persuade him to occupy his mind in the arrangement and publication of his travels.

"My friends unanimously assailed me," he says, "in the part most accessible when the spirits are weak, which is vanity. They represented to me how ignoble it was, after all my dangers and difficulties, to be conquered by a misfortune incident to all men, the indulging of which was unreasonable in itself, fruitless in its consequence, and so unlike the expectation I

had given my country by the firmness and intrepidity of my former character and behaviour.

“Others, whom I mention only for the sake of comparison, below all notice on any other account, attempted to succeed in the same design by anonymous letters and paragraphs in the newspapers; and thereby absurdly endeavoured to oblige me to publish an account of those travels, which they affected at the same time to believe I had never performed.

“It is universally known,” states the Gentleman’s Magazine for 1789, “that doubts have been entertained, *whether Mr. Bruce was ever in Abyssinia.* The Baron de Tott, speaking of the sources of the Nile, says, ‘A traveller named Bruce, it is said, has pretended to have discovered them. I saw, at Cairo, the servant who was his guide and companion during the journey, who assured me that he had *no knowledge of any such discovery.*’”

To the persuasions of his friends Bruce at last yielded, and as soon as he resolved to undertake the task, he performed it with his usual energy and application. In about three years he submitted the work, nearly finished, to his very constant and sincere friend, the Hon. Daines Barrington. In the meanwhile, his enemies triumphantly maintained a clamour against him—and in his study he was assailed by the most virulent accusations of exaggeration and falsehood—all descriptions of people were against him; from the moralist of the day, down to the witty Peter Pindar, heavy artillery as well as musketry was directed against Bruce at Kinnaird.

In the Gentleman’s Magazine for 1789, it is stated that Johnson had declared to Sir John Hawkins, “that when he first conversed with Mr. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, he was *very much inclined to believe that he had been there, but that he had afterwards altered his opinion!*”

Peter Pindar amused all people (except Bruce) by his satirical flings, one of which was,

Nor have I been where men (what loss, alas!)
Kill half a cow, and turn the rest to grass.

In the year 1790, seventeen years after his return to Europe, Bruce's work was printed and laid before the public. It consisted of five large quarto volumes, and was entitled, "Travels to discover the Sources of the Nile in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773, by James Bruce of Kinnaird, Esq., F.R.S."

The work was addressed to the king, and in the dedication Abyssinia was described as "a country so unhappily cut off from the rest of mankind, that even your majesty's name and virtues had never been known or heard of there. In laying the account of these travels," continues Bruce, "at your majesty's feet, I humbly hope I have shown to the world of what value the efforts of every individual of your majesty's subjects may be; that numbers are not always necessary to the performance of great and brilliant actions; and that no difficulties or dangers are insurmountable to a heart warm with affection and duty to his sovereign, jealous of the honour of his master, and devoted to the glory of his country, now, under your majesty's wise, merciful, and just reign, deservedly looked up to as the queen of nations."

In his preface, Bruce frankly explains the reasons which had delayed for so many years the publication of his travels, and he admits that "an undeserved and unexpected neglect and want of patronage had been at least part of the cause. But," he continues, "it is with great pleasure and readiness I now declare that no fantastical nor deformed motive, no peevish

disregard, much less contempt, of the judgment of the world, had any part in the delay which has happened to this publication. The candid and instructed public, the impartial and unprejudiced foreigner, are tribunals merit should naturally appeal to; there it always has found sure protection against the influence of cabals, and the virulent strokes of envy, malice, and ignorance."

Bruce concludes his preface with the following noble and remarkable words:—

"I have only to add, that were it probable, as in my decayed state of health it is not, that I should live to see a second edition of this work, all well-founded judicious remarks suggested should be gratefully and carefully attended to; but I do solemnly declare to the public in general, that I never will refute or answer any cavils, captious or idle objections, such as every new publication seems unavoidably to give birth to, nor ever reply to those witticisms and criticisms that appear in newspapers and periodical writings. What I have written I have written. My readers have before them, in the present volumes, all that I shall ever say, directly or indirectly, upon the subject; and I do, without one moment's anxiety, trust my defence to an impartial, well-informed, and judicious public."

Now if the public had been really "impartial, well-informed, and judicious," what a favourable impression it would have formed of a work appearing under circumstances which so peculiarly entitled it to belief! The author was not only of good family, but was a man who, having entailed his estate, was evidently proud of his family, and consequently not very likely wilfully to disgrace it. He had received a liberal education, inherited an independent fortune, and for a number of years had deliberately prepared himself

for the travels he had performed. He had not hastily passed through the countries which he described but he remained in them six years. His descriptions were not of that trifling personal nature, which in a few years it might be difficult to confirm or confute, but, with mathematical instruments in his hands, he professed to have determined the latitudes and longitudes of every place of importance which he visited, thus offering to men of science of all future ages, data to condemn him, if he should deserve condemnation; and yet in the meanwhile these data were of a description which afforded the general reader no pleasure or amusement. The work was not a hasty production; on the contrary, it appeared seventeen years after the travels it described had been ended. It did not proceed from a man basking in the vain sunshine of public favour, but it was the evidence of one who, by the public, had been most unjustly hustled from the witness-box to the dock, and, indeed, there condemned before he had been heard.

And lastly, it was information most solemnly offered to his country, and most respectfully dedicated to his king, by an old man, who in theory, in fact, and in his own just opinion, had but a very few years to live; whose constitution had been worn out by the climates which he described, and whose fortune had been seriously impaired by the misfortune of his absence. In short, the book was the performance of one who, with the meanest of his countrymen, had at least a right to be considered innocent, until it had been proved that he was guilty.

There is surely nothing which, in the opinion of liberal men, can more degrade a country—nothing which, at the great table of the world, more deservedly places it “below the salt”—than its unreasonably disbelieving an honourable man. A man’s opinions

may be canvassed, his theories may be opposed, his arguments may be resisted; but, without rhyme or reason, to disbelieve his statements, is at once to sever the band which holds society together; it destroys the allegiance which a well-disposed individual would willingly feel that he owes to public opinion; it tells him that his only defensive weapon is contempt. "Sir, you are no gentleman!" exclaimed a passionate, irrational man.—"Sir, you are no judge!" was the calm, contemptuous reply.

That a certain proportion of men are base, no one can deny, and Bruce, it is true, might have belonged to this number; yet, in his favour, it ought to have been recollected that there is no class of people who have less reason to exaggerate than those who in their travels describe the great features and phenomena of nature. In a crowded, populous, and civilised country, for our general welfare, the division of labour pervades all classes of society; and, from the country squire to the countryman—from the head to the tail of every department of the state—from the man who wears silk stockings to the poor wretch who makes them—the attention of each of us is unavoidably tethered to an object of very small insignificant dimensions. The whole country, it is most true, bears a high polish; but, like a mosaic tablet, it is composed of very minute parts. Living under such circumstances, the natural tendency of our minds is to exaggerate the importance of the little objects which surround us; but when a man like Bruce—hungry, thirsting, and weatherbeaten—has had no other companion than Nature herself, he most surely will feel no disposition to be deceitful—no cause nor reason to exaggerate; for, do what he will, his imperfect picture must always be too small. Who can describe the lightning as vividly as it flashes, or echo

the thunder as loudly as it roars? Can any man describe the ocean from his inkhorn, or put into his pocket a picture of the world?

The scenes which Bruce witnessed—the real dangers he encountered—the hardships he underwent—the fatigue he endured, required no exaggeration; and as he was lying prostrate in the desert, fainting under the simoom, he could have had no feeling more just, than that it was out of his power to make any one feel by pen-and-ink description the sensation under which he was suffering. However, though his drawing was imperfect, and its scale very diminutive, yet when he produced his picture to the civilised country, people all cried out that it was too large! But the real truth was, it was *not* as large as life, but that the mind of his enemy, like the Vicar of Wakefield's fusty room, was too small to contain the picture—and as the Arabs who inhabit villages have a mortal hatred towards those wandering tribes who live in tents, so did the garret critics of the day feel jealous of the man whose tether was so much longer than their own: and as soon as Bruce's work was published, he experienced most severely how completely party spirit, whether in religion, politics, or science, destroys both the heart and the head.

His enemies, with pens in their hands, had impatiently waited for his book, like Shylock whetting his knife; and it was no sooner published, than Bruce was deprived of what was actually nearest to his heart—his honour and his reputation.

It was useless to stand against the storm which assailed him; it was impossible to swim against the torrent which overwhelmed him. His volumes were universally disbelieved; and yet it may be most confidently stated, that Bruce's travels do not contain one single statement which, according to our present

knowledge of the world, can even be termed improbable. We do not descend to the corroboration which his statements have received from the writings of Jereme Lobo, Paez, Salt, Coffin, Pearce, Burekhardt, Brown, Clarke, Wittman, Belzoni, &c. ; for, whether these men support or contradict, their evidence would be only, say ten to one, for him or against him—which, after all, is no certainty—but we “appeal unto Cæsar,” we appeal to our present knowledge of the world upon which we live.

Bruce has stated that men eat raw flesh in Abyssinia ; we know that men in other countries eat raw fish-blubber, and even eat each other ; we ourselves eat the flesh of oysters raw. Bruce’s statement, therefore, is not and never was improbable.

Bruce has given a picture of the profligacy of the Abyssinians, which, from its disgusting features, we have purposely withheld (to a well-constituted mind such details are only disgusting) ; yet it can very easily be shown that it is not at all *improbable*. In northern countries, a female possesses personal attractions at an age in which she is also endowed with mental accomplishments ; she has judgment as well as beauty, ballast as well as sail, and, like the orange-tree, she thus bears fruit and flowers on the same stem ; but, in the precocious climate of Abyssinia, this is not the case ; and it surely need only be hinted, that there children of ten years of age are *women*, to explain what must be the sad effects of human passions, working in such an ungoverned, and, consequently, irrational state of society. There is no one of Bruce’s assertions which may not, by similar reasoning, be supported ; the English public, instead of judging, at once condemned him ; his statements were only compared with the habits and customs of England—which, at that time, were as narrow and as harsh as

the iron bed of the tyrant Procrustes ; and because the scenes which Bruce described differed from those *chez nous*, they were most unreasonably and most unjustifiably discredited.

Nevertheless, in attentively reading the latest edition of Bruce's Travels, it must be evident to every one that, in point of composition, the work has very great faults. Bruce had an immense quantity of information to give, but he wanted skill to impart it as it deserved ; and certainly nothing can be worse than the arrangement of his materials. In this narrative, he hardly starts before we have him talking quite familiarly of people and of places known only to himself ; and although perfectly at ease and at home, he forgets that his reader is an utter stranger in the land.

He also forgot, or rather he seems never to have reflected, that the generality of mankind were not as fond as himself of endeavouring to trace a dark speculative question to its source. His theories which, whether right or wrong, are certainly ingenious, constantly break the thread of his narrative ; and, like his minute history of all the kings of Abyssinia supposed to have reigned from the time of Solomon to his day, they tire and wear out the patience of the reader. Yet these were evidently very favourite parts of his volumes ; and, eager in detailing evidence and arguments which he conceived to be of great importance, he occasionally neglected his narrative, jumbled his facts and dates, and from his notes having been made on separate slips of paper, he made a few very careless mistakes. For instance, the beautiful Welleta Selasse, long after she was poisoned, is discovered by the reader making love with Amha Yasous ! Tecla Mariam, also, reappears some months after he had been drowned. Arkeeko is described after the reader has left it ; and the palace of Koscam, in which Bruce

lived so long, is not described until he had actually bidden adieu to Abyssinia. But Bruce's attention was evidently engrossed by great objects; and though his descriptions are often brilliant, and his sentiments always noble and manly, yet he cared comparatively little about certain parts of his narrative; and in the enormous mass of notes and memoranda which he brought home with him, he arranged a very few of them in their wrong places. But his mistakes, excepting one, were harmless, and absolutely not worth notice, although to the critic they were, of course, gems of inestimable value. The only one which requires explanation, is that, in describing Gondar, he mentions the death of Balugani (his Italian draughtsman), before he mentions his journey to the sources of the Nile; and as Balugani died after this journey, Bruce's enemies in general, and Salt in particular, have endeavoured at great length to prove that this error was deliberately intended to rob Balugani of the honour of having accompanied him to these fountains; whereas, it being perfectly well known, that Bruce engaged Balugani at a salary of thirty-five Roman crowns a-month, for the express purpose of accompanying him in his travels, it is not likely that he should have been jealous of his own servant, particularly as, if he had wished to have gone to Geesh without Balugani, he had only to have ordered him to remain at Gondar. But every trifling mistake which Bruce made was distorted, and construed into fraud and deceit. His dates are occasionally wrong; but in his notes, which he brought to England, they are often inserted in so trembling a hand, that it is but too evident they were written on a bed of sickness. Besides this, it must surely be known to every one that, when a man visits such immense countries as Bruce travelled across, his great difficulty is to

overlook detail; for, like a hound, if once he puts his nose to the ground, he gets puzzled. No man can attempt to conduct a trigonometrical survey, and to fill it up, at the same time: if he has to determine the grand features of the country, it is impossible he can be very attentive to its detail; and if he be minute in his detail, he can have looked very little to the general character of the country;—a man cannot study astronomy and botany at the same time.

However, Bruce's Travels were disbelieved *in toto*, and it was even proclaimed from literary garrets that he had never been in Abyssinia at all! Dr. Clarke says—"Soon after the publication of his Travels to discover the sources of the Nile, several copies of the work were sold in Dublin as waste paper, in consequence of the calumnies circulated against the author's veracity."

There is something so narrow-minded, and what is infinitely worse, so low-minded, in unjustly accusing an honest servant of exaggeration, that to do Bruce justice—to repel the attack of his enemy—it is absolutely necessary defensively to show how little this country was entitled to pronounce such a verdict.

When Bruce published his Travels, British intellect had marched exactly half-way from the Mississippi and South Sea schemes of the year 1720 towards the equally ruinous speculations of the year 1825, which, as we all know, proceeded from the same disreputable parents—had the same pedigree, the same sire, and the same dam—being got by Fraud out of Folly. The first of these bubbles had burst, the others were not yet blown; and thus between these two bundles of hay, stood that "Public Opinion" which obstinately condemned Bruce—that incredulity of the credulous.

Bruce's great object in travelling to such remote

countries had been honestly to raise himself and his family in the estimation of the world. This reward, to which he was so justly entitled, was not only withheld from him, but he found himself absolutely lowered in society, as a man guilty of exaggeration and falsehood. Under such cruel treatment, nothing could be more dignified than his behaviour. He treated his country with the silent contempt which it deserved—he disdained to make any reply to the publications which impeached his veracity; and when his friends earnestly entreated him to alter, to modify, to explain, the accounts which he had given, he sternly replied, in the words of his preface.....“ What I have written, I have written!”

To his daughter, his favourite child, he alone opened his heart: although scarcely twelve years of age when he published his Travels, she was his constant companion; and he used to teach her the proper mode of pronouncing the Abyſſinian words, “ that he might leave,” as he said, “ some one behind him who could pronounce them correctly.” He repeatedly said to her, with feelings highly excited, “ *I* shall not live to see it, but *you* probably will, and you will then see the truth of all I have written thoroughly confirmed.” In this expectation, however, it may here be observed, Bruce was deceived.

This daughter, who afterwards married John Jardine, Esq., an advocate in Edinburgh, never lived to see justice done to the memory of her beloved parent. When Dr. Clarke’s examination of the Abyſſinian dean strongly corroborated some of Bruce’s statements, Mrs. Jardine, who was then ill in bed, sketched with her pencil a short account of this confirmation, so happily expressed, that it appeared in the Scots’ Magazine for December, 1819, with scarcely the alteration of a word. To the last hour of her

life she was devotedly attached to the memory of her excellent and respected father; and, in a memorandum written by one of the ablest writers of the present day, she has been described to us as one of the most amiable and intelligent women he ever knew.

After the publication of his Travels, Bruce occupied himself in the management of his estate and of his extensive collieries. He visited London occasionally, and kept up a correspondence with Daines Barrington, and with Buffon. He also employed his time in biblical literature, and even projected an edition of the Bible, with notes, pointing out numberless instances in which the Jewish history was singularly confirmed by his own observations. He took a deep interest in the French revolution. He had received much personal kindness from Louis XVI., and when intelligence arrived that the king was stopped in his attempt to escape from Paris, before the 12th of August, 1792, Bruce was so much affected, that his daughter observed him to shed tears.

His notions of his own consequence, and of the antiquity of his family, were high, and he had, consequently, the reputation of being a proud man; yet he was in the habit of entertaining, at Kinnaird, with great hospitality, strangers, and those people of distinction who visited him; and, in his own family, he was a delightful companion, entering into the amusements of his children with great delight. His young and amiable daughter used to walk, almost every morning, by his side, while Bruce, who had now grown exceedingly heavy and lusty*, rode slowly

* Mr. Walker, the very respectable hydrographer of the Admiralty, who engraved Bruce's map, and who had much personal communication with him on the subject, has told us, "that Bruce was latterly so large and heavy a man, that, in getting into his carriage, it bent sideways with his weight." As a curious instance of Bruce's

over his estate to his colleries, mounted on a charger of great power and size. At Kinnaird he was often seen dressed in a turban, and reclining in an Eastern costume; and in those moments it may easily be conceived that his thoughts flew with eager pleasure to the mountains of Abyssinia—that Ozoro Esther, Ras Michael, Gusho, Powussen, Fasil, Tecla Mariam, were before his eyes, and that, in their society, beloved, respected, and admired, he was once again—Yagoube, the white man! But, although his life at Kinnaird was apparently tranquil, his wounded feelings, respecting his travels, occasionally betrayed themselves. One day, while he was at the house of a relation in East Lothian, a gentleman present bluntly observed, that it was *impossible* that the natives of Abyssinia could eat raw meat! Bruce said not a word; but leaving the room shortly returned from the kitchen with a piece of raw beefsteak, peppered and salted in the Abyssinian fashion. “You will eat that, Sir, or fight me!” he said. When the gentleman had eaten up the raw flesh (most willingly would he have eaten his words instead), Bruce calmly observed, “Now, Sir, you will never again say it is *impossible*!”

Single-speech Hamilton was Bruce’s first cousin, and intimate friend. One evening, at Kinnaird, he said, “Bruce! to convince the world of your power of drawing, you need only draw us now something in as good a style as those drawings of yours which they say have been done for you by Balugani, your Italian artist.” “Gerard!” replied Bruce, very gravely, “you made *one* fine speech, and the world doubted its being your own composition, but, if you will stand

opinion of his own importance being always uppermost in his mind, we may add, that one day, while he was giving directions about his engravings, he observed to Mr. Walker, “that he was entitled to give his servants royal livery.”

up now here, and make another speech as good, we shall believe it to have been your own."

These trifling anecdotes sufficiently show how sensitive Bruce was to the unjust insult that had been offered to him. For twenty years, that had elapsed since his return to Europe, he had endured treatment which it was totally out of his power to repel. It is true, that he had been complimented by Dr. Blair, and a few other people, on the valuable information he had revealed; but the public voice still accused him of falsehood, or, what is equally culpable, of wilful exaggeration, and against the gross public an individual can do nothing. Bruce's career of happiness was at an end—he had survived his reputation, and the only remedy left him was that which a noble Roman is supposed to have prescribed for his own son. "What could he do," he was asked, "against so many?" he answered. . . . "DIE!" and this catastrophe—this "consummation devoutly to be wished," we have now the pleasure to relate.

The last act of Bruce's life was one of gentleman-like, refined, and polite attention. A large party had dined at Kinnaird, and while they were about to depart, Bruce was gaily talking to a young lady in the drawing-room, when, suddenly observing that her aged mother was proceeding to her carriage unattended, he hurried from the drawing-room to the great staircase. In this effort, the foot which had safely carried him through all his dangers, happened to fail him; he fell down several of the steps—broke some of his fingers—pitched on his head—and never spoke again!

For several hours every effort was made to restore him to the world; all that is usual, customary, and useless, in such cases, was performed.

There was the bustle, the hurry, the confusion,

the grief unspeakable, the village leech, his lancet, his phial, and his little pill; but the lamp was out—the book was closed—the lease was up—the game was won—the daring, restless, injured spirit had burst from the covert, and was—“away!”

Thus perished, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, in the healthy winter of his life, in vigour of mind and body, James Bruce of Kinnaird, a Scotchman, who was religious, loyal, honourable, brave, prudent, and enterprising. He was too proud of his ancestors, yet his posterity have reason to be proud of him. His temper was eager, hasty, and impetuous; yet he himself selected for the employment of his life enterprises of danger in which haste, eagerness, and impetuosity were converted into the means of serving science and his country. The eagerness with which he toiled for the approbation of the world, and the pain he suffered from its cruelty and injustice, exclude him from ranking among those great men who, by religion, or even by philosophy, may have learnt to despise both; yet it must be observed, that, had he possessed this equanimity of mind, he would never have undertaken the race which he won.

Bruce belonged to that sect—that labouring class—that useful race of men, who are ever ready

To set their life upon a cast,
And stand the hazard of the die.

He was merely a traveller—a knight-errant in search of new regions of the world; yet the steady courage with which he encountered danger—his patience and fortitude in adversity—his good sense in prosperity—the tact and judgment with which he steered his lonely course through some of the most barren and barbarous countries in the world, bending even the ignorance, passions, and prejudices of the people he visited to his own advantage—the graphic truth with

ch he described the strange scenes he had witnessed, and the inflexible courage with which he maintained his assertions against the mean, barbarous incredulity of his age, most deservedly place him at the top of his own class, where he at least stands—second to no man. His example is well worthy the attention and study of every individual whose duty or inclination may lead him to attempt to penetrate the yet unknown, dangerous, and uncivilised regions of this world.

Four days after his death, his corpse, attended by his tenantry, and by several of the principal men in the country, was deposited in the churchyard of *St. Andrew's* in a tomb which Bruce had built for his *self* and his infant child.

On the south side of the monument there is the following inscription:—

IN THIS TOMB ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS
OF

JAMES BRUCE, Esq., OF KINNAIRD,
WHO DIED ON THE 27TH OF APRIL, 1794,
IN THE 64TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

HIS LIFE WAS SPENT IN PERFORMING
USEFUL AND SPLENDID ACTIONS.

HE EXPLORED MANY DISTANT REGIONS.

HE DISCOVERED THE SOURCES OF THE NILE.

HE TRAVERSED THE DESERTS OF NUBIA.

HE WAS AN AFFECTIONATE HUSBAND,
AN INDULGENT PARENT,
AN ARDENT LOVER OF HIS COUNTRY.

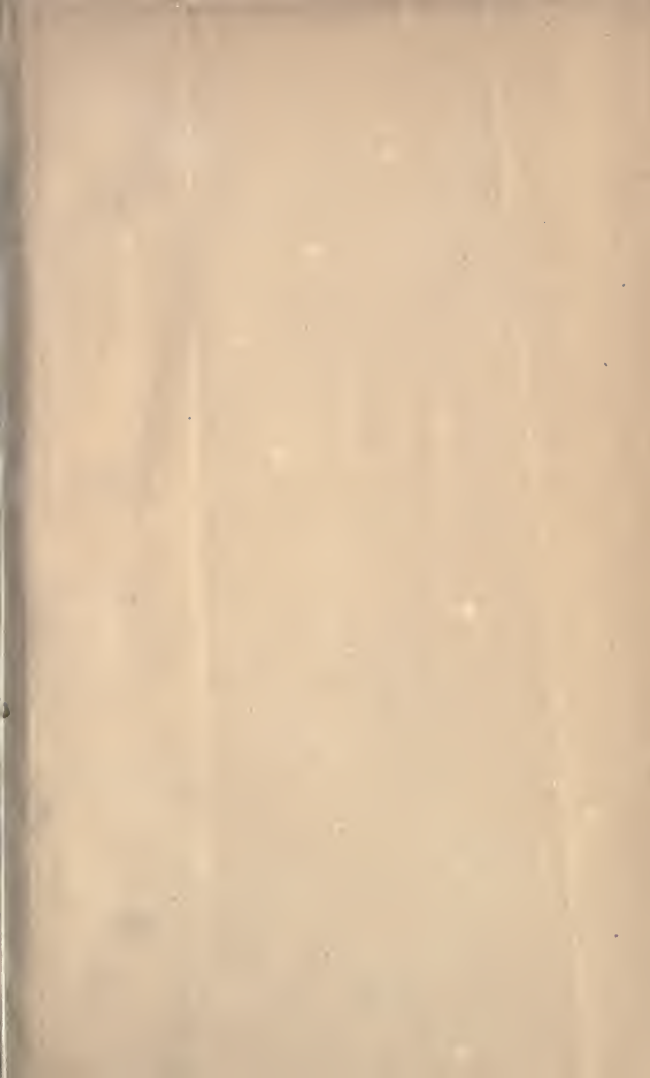
BY THE UNANIMOUS VOICE OF MANKIND,
HIS NAME IS ENROLLED WITH THOSE
WHO WERE CONSPICUOUS

FOR GENIUS, FOR VALOUR, AND FOR VIRTUE.

The descendants of James Bruce of Kinnaird remain to this day, in their country—unrewarded.

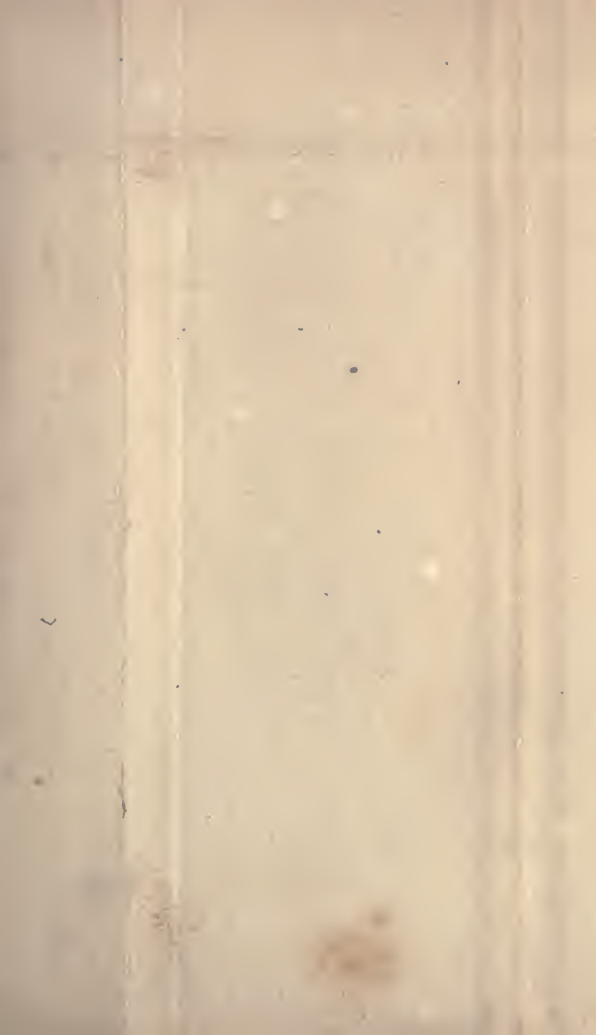
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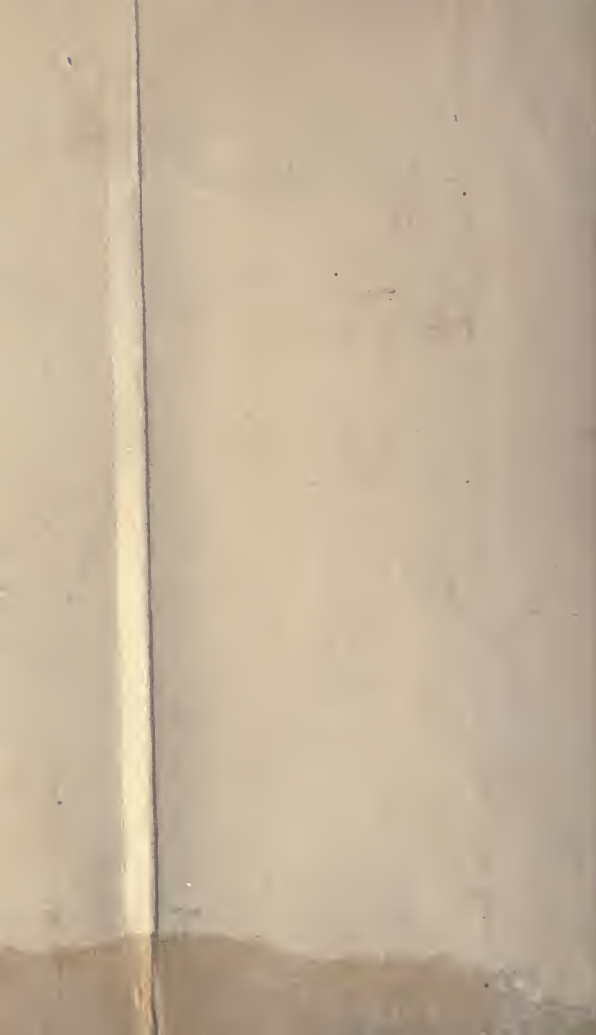
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