



CLASSICS TO GO

**THE LIFE AND
ADVENTURES OF BRUCE
THE AFRICAN TRAVELLER
SIR FRANCIS BOND HEAD**

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JAMES BRUCE.

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,^[1] and David Hay of Woodcockdale, descended from an old and respectable branch of the Hays of Enroll, distinguished in ancient Scottish history by their bravery, and who 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 23d 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 which nothing in this world can compensate. A few years afterward, his father married the daughter of James Glen, of Longcroft, 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 3d of August, 1780, took from the Mahrattas the fortress of Gualior.

Though well formed, Bruce did not, as a child, appear to possess the 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 afterward 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, 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 July, 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 will reconcile the seeming contradiction. 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 amount, induces men to seek occupations more or less active and sedentary; and it may be observed, that this ingredient, like the down which conveys many vegetable seeds 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 confined at home, and directed to nearly the same pursuits: and hence

it was that Bruce, when a sickly lad, as much surprised his friends by his grave, sedentary disposition, as he afterward astonished them by his wild, wandering propensities and daring researches.

After leaving Harrow, Bruce went, for about a year, to an academy, where, besides the 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 the view of becoming 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 acquired a partiality 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 intricate and tedious 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; 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 midst of some very grave maxims, "Bella ingrata, io morirò!" with other equally loving 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 unworthy of remark, that the boy who was thus lost in the labyrinths of Scottish law lived to be the man who afterward 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 best 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 the

view of prosecuting 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 diligence 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 fell in love with this interesting young lady, and accordingly addressed himself to Mrs. Allan, who listened with 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, as it was to be the link which was to connect him with the object of his affections, he eagerly assented to the proposal. The marriage took place on the 3d of February, 1754, and Bruce took an active part in the management of the concern. The dealings of the company were extensive, and 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 foggy atmosphere of London. She resided at Bristol for a few months, for the benefit of the waters, though with little advantage: her complaint was alleviated, but 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 during her last moments, he was driven almost to distraction by the disgraceful bigotry of the French priests, who, in the garb of Christian ministers, crowded around 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, their intolerant fury 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 afterward, 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, 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 10th and 11th 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 with the wine-trade was completely broken. He therefore at once gave up the chief burden of its management to his brother; and, resolving to embrace the first opportunity to resign his share altogether, he applied himself to studies calculated to divert his mind from painful

thoughts and recollections. For about two years he occupied himself with the Spanish and Portuguese languages, which he learned to pronounce with great accuracy. He also laboured 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, therefore, with his business; and he looked forward 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, while his real intention was to view the state of society and of science in those kingdoms. He landed at Corunna, in Galicia, on the 5th 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 manners and customs so different from those of his own country; and his journals during this period are filled with satirical observations on the apparent pride and stiffness of the nobility, and the ignorance of the clergy. The following may be given as a 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.^[2] 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 of 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 historical records from every intelligent foreigner obstructed all access to the Library of the Escorial; but the minister, pleased with the adventurous spirit and the intelligence which he 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; and, like the swallow, about to take its departure it knows not where, he kept constantly on the wing, flying apparently everywhere rather than be at rest. After having made many observations on the several places which he visited in Spain, on Christmas day, 1757, he arrived at Pampeluna, the capital of Navarre, on his way to France.

Crossing 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 visited 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; and Bruce, having wounded his antagonist, 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 he had ever witnessed. He had often boasted, and still more often dreamed, of what he was always delighted to call the *exploits* of his ancestors, but hitherto he had only read or heard of war. The moment he became acquainted with its reality, it appeared to his excited mind to be a brilliant game, teeming with prizes and blanks; a legal gambling of life, which, by comparison, made every other employment appear trifling and insipid; and, impressed with these feelings, he resolved to forsake the peaceful life he had hitherto led, and seek adventures more congenial, as he conceived, to the spirit of his ancestors.

On his way to England he received a letter at Rotterdam 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 excellent character and sound abilities, he was now deprived of all that he had ever known of parental love. He immediately proceeded to England, where he arrived 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 with his concern 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 diligently 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 tongue, which first directed his attention to the mountains of Abyssinia. While he was thus employed, the establishment of the Carron Company in Scotland made 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 Galicia, 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 appeared to Bruce that an attack on it by a British squadron could not fail of being 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 public, our 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 facts 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 intrust 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 shortly after 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 that he must not fail 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 now several meetings with Bruce, to concert an expedition against Ferrol, the execution of which was to be intrusted to Lord Howe; but, at the earnest request of the Portuguese ambassador, the project was 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 abundance over the whole of that country. Lord Halifax therefore expressed a wish that Bruce should be the first, in the reign just now commencing, to set an example of making large additions to the royal collection; he pledged himself to be his 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

mentioned as a thing to be accomplished only by a more experienced traveller, yet Bruce always declared 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, he dying a few days afterward, the consulship again became vacant, and Lord Halifax pressed Bruce to accept it, as being convenient for aiding him in 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 at 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 despatches which were to be there forwarded to him.

Delighted with prospects so congenial to his disposition, being now thirty-two years of age, he sailed from England in June, 1762; and, though some objections had been made as to particular passports solicited by the British 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 to remain in France, with those who might accompany 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 farther commands. He afterward went to Florence, where he remained most studiously occupied for a considerable 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 Englishmen, 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;^[3] 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 concluded that the packing and repacking, mounting and rectifying the instruments alone would wholly occupy one man; and he therefore wrote to several of his correspondents, 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 two camera obscuras, the largest of which was made of separate 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 an hour than the readiest artist, without such assistance, in seven.

After having passed eight months at Naples, Rome, Bologna, and Florence,^[4] 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. Proceeding immediately to Leghorn, Bruce embarked on board the

Montreal man-of-war, and arrived at Algiers on the 15th of March, 1763.

FOOTNOTES:

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

[2] See M. Florian's History of the Moors of Spain, published by Harper & Brothers, 1840.

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

[4] 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—the 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.

We have already 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, opposed many unjust demands made on him by the dey, who, in consequence, sent a letter to England requesting that he might be dismissed, and Mr. Ford, a British merchant, 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 to 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 Bruce, on his arrival at Algiers, 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 appropriately distinguished by the appellation of great men. In the history of mankind, it is curious to observe how, in the various conditions of society, different descriptions of men rise to the surface, where they remain until a moral revolution, altering their specific gravity, obliges them to sink into oblivion. In a highly-civilized community, a man

rises to distinction by the estimable qualities of his nature: in an uncivilized 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.^[5] 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 farther 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 afterward the prime minister, who had been expected to succeed the dey, was arrested in his presence, and instantly strangled; and all his relations, and even his friends, were privately put to death, in order to stifle any inclination they might feel, to complain of the murder of this personage. Not long after, the French Consul hesitating to comply with some orders received from the dey, he 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 among all the public officers, who consider it as their due rather than as a gift which they are fortunate

enough to receive. Bruce's present consisted principally of blue cloth, his distribution of which furnished 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 commander of the navy," the "captain of the port," and the "master carpenter," each received eight yards; while 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; 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 the government at home also refused to admit), but it 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^[6] 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 3d 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 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 informed 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 per annum; Sweden and Holland do the same; and to give me the preference over the others, not less than £2000 yearly is distributed by the other consuls in jewels and watches, as private presents to the regency; Venice has spent about £20,000 to make peace, and pays £4000 yearly; France, to rescue 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 have 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 endorsed, 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 farther 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 afterward, 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^[7] 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 bastinadoes, 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 bastinadoes would kill him; nor could he satisfy them in a single syllable, as I have never, in writing or 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.[8]

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 national dignity 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 that I can be of no

farther 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 England in disputes with the Barbary States, filled up the blanks of these 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 the ships of their nation with written certificates, which they imprudently termed *Passavans*: 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.