

It was feared at Stamboul (and events have proved these fears not to be vain) that the Pacha would finish by throwing off the yoke of the heir of the Caliphs.

In vain the sordid policy of the Seraglio had often despatched into Egypt the Capidgi Baschis armed with the poinard and the cord: in vain these perfidious agents had made use of every effort to deliver the Sultan from so dangerous a rival by means of poison; Mehemet Ali always upon his guard, and well informed of his spies at Constantinople, never fell into the snares which were laid for him. The Sultan at length hit upon a plan so artfully conceived and wrapped up in so impenetrable a mystery, that it appeared impossible it should fail.

The imperial harem contained at that time a Georgian slave, of the most perfect beauty, and whose innocence seemed to promise the Sultan the success of the project which he had conceived. The faith in talisman exists still in all its force in the east; this traditional superstition is prevalent with the Mussulmans of every class. Mahmoud sent one day for the beautiful Georgian, and feigning a great affection for her, and a lively desire to render her happy, he told her that his imperial will was to send her into Egypt, and to offer her as a present to Mehemet Ali, whose riches and power were unlimited as the countries to which he gave the law. He made her understand that if she succeeded in captivating the master for whom he destined her, felicity without bounds would be her portion, she would be the sovereign of Egypt, and reign over numberless empires. The Sultan added, that to secure the accomplishment of the desires that his heart formed for her happiness and glory, he would give her a talisman, which he then placed on her finger. Watch, said he, the first moment that the Pacha shall repose upon your bosom, throw this ring into a glass of water, present it to Mehemet Ali, and if he drinks it, you will be absolute mistress, he will for ever be your lover and your slave. The simple Georgian, dazzled with her future grandeur, accepted with delight the fortune which her master offered to her, and promised in all points to follow the directions of the Sultan.

Soon she arrived at Cairo, with a splendid suite and numerous slaves laden with rich presents. But the secret agents whom Mehemet Ali kept at the Sublime Porte had warned him of a plot against his life, without however, being able to acquaint him with the precise nature of it. They had advised him only that, according to all probability, the Georgian was to be the instrument of it. Besides, a demonstration of friendship so extraordinary on the part of a master of whom he was an object of jealousy, would naturally alarm the Pacha. Thus he did not permit the beautiful Georgian to enjoy the light of his presence, and after some stay at Cairo, he sent her as a present to his intimate friend Belley Aga, Governor of Alexandria, of whom (by way of parenthesis) he had been jealous for some time.

After having lost a Pacha, the poor Georgian thought the best thing to be done was to captivate his Aga, to whom in effect she administered the fatal beverage, according to the instructions which the Sultan had given for Mehemet Ali. The Aga fell down dead, the Georgian uttered the most piercing cries.

Immediately the eunuchs came and carried away the body of their master. Accused of having poisoned the Aga, the Georgian denied it calmly and with firmness. What have you then done to him? they demanded. I have given him a glass of water, into which I cast a talisman, answered she: behold both, the glass and the ring. The ring was there, it is true, but the stone with which it was set had disappeared—it was dissolved.

FROM CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL.

HARRIET BRUCE.

"To be loved is all I need,
And whom I love I love indeed.—Coieridge.

My friend Harriet Bruce was a healthy, tall, bold looking girl; somewhat too large and vigorous for genuine beauty, yet gifted with a speaking expression, and a rich, perpetual colouring, that would have made any other face stylish and attractive. She was no favourite with the gentlemen; but there was an indescribable something about her appearance and manners which always compelled them to inquire who she was. No person ever talked with her without remembering what she said; and every one criticised what they could not forget. Yet it was not intellect that made her unpopular—had she chosen to affect reckless misanthropy, maudlin sensibility, or any other foppery whereby to distinguish herself, she would have found plenty of admirers and imitators; but, in her mind, genius was checked by manly philosophy; and she could ill conceal her contempt of those who knew talent only by its most common diseases. The consciousness of mental power, that lighted up her eye with such a burning spark of pride, and the expression of scorn for ever dancing on her lip corners, ready to embody itself in sarcasm, was unquestionably the true reason why this splendid creature became the Paria of the ball-room. She was a strange sort of *Die Vernon*—no, she was not a *Die Vernon* either—and as I now remember, I cannot think of a single character, living or imaginary, whom she did resemble. She fascinated her enemies, but never pleased her friends. Power! power! and, above all, intellectual power! was the constant dream of her wild ambition. To have been sure of Madame de Stael's reputation, she would

have renounced human sympathy, and livid unloving and unbeloved in this wide world of social happiness—there was such magnificence in the idea of sending one's genius abroad, like a spark of electricity, to be active and eternal—defying education in its form, duration, and power! Sometimes I talked of love, and reminded her how Madame de Stael herself had become its reluctant victim. On this subject she often philosophised, and always laughed. 'Who,' said she, scornfully, 'who that has felt the gush and the thrill attendant upon fame, would be foolish enough to exchange dominion over many for the despotism of one?' Thus Harriet Bruce reasoned, and thus she actually thought; but I knew her better than she knew herself. Her affections were as rich and overflowing as her mental energies; and her craving for human sympathy was in direct proportion to that intense love of beauty, which, in her, amounted to an intellectual passion. That she would love exclusively and extravagantly, I had no doubt; and my penetration soon singled out an object. At a large party, I first saw her with George Macdonough, the son of a rich southerner first in his class, and in the full flush of manly beauty. I knew by the carriage of his neck that he was a Virginian; and the hauteur with which he received adulation attracted my attention, as the pawing of a high-mettled horse would have done. His conversation with Harriet seemed at first to be of a sober and learned cast, but on her part it soon became petulant. Now and then I heard some remark which seemed to relate to a transmigration of souls, and a continual rise in intellectual existence. 'Oh,' exclaimed Harriet, 'how that idea savours of New England house-keeping!—how can a Virginian patronise a theory so economical?' At that moment, a very lovely girl entered the room; and the young man did not answer Miss Bruce's question. 'Ah, there is the beautiful Baltimorean,' said he, 'she whom I told you reminded me of that fine engraving of yours, *'La belle Suisse.'*' 'She is beautiful,' said Harriet, with unaffected warmth. 'Her full dark eyes are magnificent—what a pity it is they are not lighted from within; that expression alone is wanting to fill the measure of her glory.' The remark was made to an inattentive listener, for Macdonough's whole interest was absorbed by the new comer. A slight shade passed over Harriet's face—but it was too transient to define the emotion in which it originated; and she smiled, as she said, 'You had best go and talk with your powerful beauty—the body should be where the spirit is.' 'That reproach is too severe,' replied the Virginian. 'I meant no reproach,' she answered; 'I have observed that beauty is your idol, and I wish you to worship it.' 'I did not think Miss Bruce had observed my character sufficiently to form any conclusion with regard to my taste.' The pride of the proudest girl in Christendom was roused—and there was something indelibly provoking in her manner, as she answered, 'I assure you I think you quite a specimen in your way. Society is such a bag of polished marbles; that any thing odd is as valuable a study as the specimens of quartz Mr. Symmes may bring us. Your modesty has led you into a mistake: I have really taken the trouble to observe you.' 'Truly Miss Bruce, you are the most singular girl I ever met,' said the offended southerner; 'you never did, said, nor thought any thing like another person.'

'When a compliment is doubtful, Chesterfield says, one should always take it; therefore, I am obliged to you, Mr. Macdonough,' replied Harriet. And so saying, she turned abruptly from him, and directed her attention to me.

During the remainder of the evening, I saw no indications of a reconciliation. Harriet danced but once—Macdonough and *La belle Suisse* were near her in the set; and they met frequently. The extreme nonchalance with which she now and then exchanged some casual remark, led me to suspect that he had obtained more power over her extraordinary mind than any other individual had ever possessed; but Harriet was no trifler, and I did not venture to prophesy.

Time passed on, and with it nearly passed the remembrance of this skirmish of words, and the thoughts thereby suggested. My unmanageable friend seldom alluded to the fascinating acquaintance she had formed; and when she did, it was done naturally and briefly. Soon after this, I was obliged to be absent for several months. I did not return until two days before commencement at college; and Harriet's first exclamation was, 'You must go to Mr. Macdonough's room—he is to have the first part, and his friends expect every thing from him.' 'But I thought you considered commencement days very stupid things,' said I. 'So I do; you know I always said life itself was a very stupid thing. There is no originality above ground; every thing that is true is dull, and every thing new is false and superficial. But there is no use in quarrelling with the world—it is a pretty good world, after all. You must go to hear Mr. Macdonough's opinion of it: I am sure he will express it eloquently.' Then

you are on good terms now?' said I. She blushed painfully—excessively—but soon recovered self-command enough to reply, 'I always thought highly of him.' I do not know whether my looks expressed the warning voice my heart was yearning to utter; but I am sure the tone of my assent was reluctant and melancholy.

George Macdonough appeared most brilliantly on that memorable day. Graceful and dignified, handsome and talented, he sent a thrill to all hearts alive to the grandeur of thought or the beauty of language. During this scene of triumph, I watched the countenance of Harriet Bruce with the keenest interest; and never before did I see a human face through which the soul beamed with such intensity. Genius, and pride, and joy, and love, were there! I then thought she was intellectually beautiful, beyond any thing I had ever seen. Poor Harriet! It was the brightest spot in her life, and I love to remember it.

Macdonough's room was crowded, and the compliments he received were intoxicating; but in the midst of it all, I imagined I could see the sparkle of his eyes melt into softness, when he met a glance from Harriet. Her looks betrayed nothing to my anxious observation; but once I took notice she called him 'George,' and suddenly corrected herself with an air of extraordinary confusion. Had my friend indulged in habits of girlish trifling, I should no doubt have playfully alluded to this circumstance; but there was something in her character and manners which forbade such officiousness. I watched her with the anxiety of sincere friendship. I knew when she once selected an object of pursuit, her whole soul was concentrated; and I could not believe that the proud Virginian, with all his high hopes, and his love of dazzling beauty, would ever marry her. I knew he was a very constant visitor, and I frequently observed lights later than had been usual in Mr. Bruce's quiet habitation; and when he called to bid me farewell, a few weeks after commencement, the deep glow on his countenance led me to think that the pride and apparent indifference of my intellectual friend might have surprised me into love.

Weeks and months passed on, and I seldom heard an allusion to the absent Macdonough. Harriet's character and manners seemed changing for the better. The perpetual effervescence of her spirit in some measure subsided, and the vagaries of her fancy became less various and startling; yet there was ever a chastened cheerfulness of manner, and an unflinching flow of thought. By degrees her seriousness deepened, and at last she could not conceal from me that she was unhappy. I attributed it to the illness of her aged father, for Harriet was motherless, and she cherished her only parent with a double share of love. But when the old man was evidently recovering, and her melancholy still increased, I knew there must be another, and a deeper cause. One day, as I stood by her, watching her progress in a crayon drawing, around which she had thrown much of her early spirit and freedom, I placed my hand affectionately on her shoulder, and, touching her forehead with my lips, said, 'You have always told me your thoughts, Harriet—why not tell me what troubles you now?' She continued her task with a quick and nervous movement, and I saw that her eyes were filling with tears. I gently whispered, 'Is George Macdonough the cause?' She gave one shriek, which sounded as if it made a rent in her very soul, and then the torrent of her tears poured forth.

It was long before I ventured to say to her, 'Then it is as I feared? You do love George Macdonough?' She looked in my face with a strange and fixed expression, as she replied, 'I ought to love and honour, and obey him; for he is my husband! I started! Your husband! how—when—where were you married?'

'At Providence. Do you remember when I asked you to go with me to Mr. Macdonough's room, and you said, "So, then you are on good terms now?"—I had been three weeks a wife!'

'And your father—does he know of it?' 'Certainly,' she said; 'you know I would not deceive him.' 'Then why so much secrecy necessary?' 'I now think it was not really necessary; at all events, that which needs to be concealed is wrong. But George's parents wished him to marry wealth, and he feared to displease them. He has a moderate fortune of his own, of which he will soon come in possession; when he told my father this circumstance, and added that he feared he should be urged to marry against his inclination, my father, in the blindness of his dotage, consented to our immediate union.' 'Then why are you so unhappy?' I inquired; 'you have no doubt that your husband will come and claim you?' 'Oh, no! The certificate is in my father's hands; and if it were not, a sense of honour would lead him here. But, oh! to have him come coldly and reluctantly, my heart will break! my heart will break!' said she, pressing her hand hard against her forehead, and weeping bitterly. 'How could I forget that they who listen to passion,