

she believed Idris to be as perfect as any body; but, in case we met with the Bishareen they would neither shew to him nor to me any mercy. She gave me, however, a letter to Mahomet Abou Bertran, shekh of one of the tribes of Bishareen, on the Tacazze, near the Magiran, which she made her son write from the howat, it not being usual, she said, for her to write herself. I begged I might be again allowed to testify my gratitude by kissing her hand, which she condescended to in the most gracious manner, laughing all the time, and saying, "Well, you are an odd man! if Idris, my son, saw me just now, he would think me mad."

On the 20th of October, Mr. Bruce left Chendi. He was still above 900 miles from the entrance into Egypt. Next day he saw a large island in the Nile, opposite to which are extensive ruins, and this, he conjectured, might be the ancient city of Meroë. On the 26th, he and his party committed themselves to the desert: they were nine in number, eight only of whom were effective, and were well armed. Five or six naked wretches joined them at the watering place. Here they parted from the Nile, doubting if ever they would see it again.

Having travelled three days in the desert, they were 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,' says Mr. Bruce, '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 the 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 great-