

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Books of enduring scholarly value

Travel, Middle East and Asia Minor

This collection of travel narratives, primarily from the nineteenth century, describing the topography, antiquities and inhabitants of the Middle East, from Turkey, Kurdistan and Persia to Mesopotamia, Syria, Jerusalem, Sinai, Egypt and Arabia. While some travellers came to study Christian sites and manuscripts, others were fascinated by Islamic culture and still others by the remains of ancient civilizations. Among the authors are several daring female explorers.

Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope

Charles Lewis Meryon (1783–1877) was the personal physician to the unconventional and adventurous Lady Hester Stanhope (1776–1839), who left England in 1810 to travel to the Middle East. She eventually settled in Lebanon and by the time she died no longer had contact with any Europeans. Meryon's *Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope* (also reissued in this series) recounted her journey during the first seven years he spent with her before returning to England to complete his medical training. Over the next twenty years, they remained in contact and he stayed with her on two more occasions before she died. In this three-volume work, first published in 1845, Meryon presents letters he received from her and recounts their conversations, giving a remarkable insight into the woman he describes as 'out of humour with all mankind'. Volume 1 covers events between 1823 and 1837, beginning with her letters imploring him to visit.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library and other partner libraries, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection brings back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope

VOLUME 1

CHARLES LEWIS MERYON



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108052085

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2012

This edition first published 1845

This digitally printed version 2012

ISBN 978-1-108-05208-5 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

Cambridge University Press wishes to make clear that the book, unless originally published by Cambridge, is not being republished by, in association or collaboration with, or with the endorsement or approval of, the original publisher or its successors in title.

The original edition of this book contains a number of colour plates, which have been reproduced in black and white. Colour versions of these images can be found online at www.cambridge.org/9781108052085

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1
Charles Lewis Meryon
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



Day & Hughes Lith "to the Queen"

LADY HESTER STANHOPE,

London Henry Colburn, 1845.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

MEMOIRS
OF THE
LADY HESTER STANHOPE,
AS RELATED BY HERSELF
IN CONVERSATIONS WITH HER
PHYSICIAN;
COMPRISING
HER OPINIONS AND ANECDOTES OF
SOME OF THE MOST REMARKABLE PERSONS
OF HER TIME.

All such writings and discourses as touch no man will mend no
man.—TYERS'S *Rhapsody on Pope*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1845.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LONDON :

F. SHOBERL, JUN. 51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET,

PRINTER TO H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E.

There are some people in the world whose pride is so great or so little, that the remarks of any individual, respecting their condition, do not affect them one way or the other. Such a person was Lady Hester Stanhope; and I beg leave, at the outset of this work, to apprise the reader, in the most explicit terms, that I have published nothing, in what I am about to submit to his perusal, which she would not have desired to be *now* made known. As a professional man, who was for many years her physician, I may naturally be supposed to feel a deep interest about her; and, when I had seen her in the first epoch of her peregrinations, dwelling in palaces, surrounded with all the luxuries common to her rank, and courted and admired by all who had access to her, I could not but be poignantly affected in beholding the privations to which she was latterly sub-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

jected. My object being to portray a character which is not duly appreciated by people in general, I could devise no better means than that of giving a diary of her conversations, wherein her observations on men and things fall naturally from her own mouth.

Whilst I acknowledge my own unfitness for such a work, my chief reason for undertaking it is the possession of numerous memoranda, resembling the unfashioned marble fresh from the quarry, rudely shaped, but, to the philosopher and moralist, bearing the marks of the soil from whence it was taken. Had I entrusted them to abler hands, to form into a more perfect composition, the materials might have been embellished, but it would have been at the expense of their originality.

Lady Hester Stanhope, noble by birth and haughty by nature, had carried out from England all the habits of her order; but a prolonged residence in the East amongst the Turks induced her to reflect on the different customs of those around her, and she adopted by degrees all such as she thought had good sense for their basis. Every year brought her nearer to the simplicity of nature, and taught her to throw down those barriers with which pride, reserve, and etiquette have hedged in persons of rank in this country—bar-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

v

riers, favourable to a complete separation between the rich and poor, the high and low, but which have also excluded our aristocracy from the enjoyment of many of the pleasures of life, and have too often made them the slaves of their own greatness.

The following pages are faithful transcripts of Lady Hester Stanhope's conversations. In the thousand and one nights that I have sat and listened to them, I have heard enough to compile an uninterrupted history of her life from her infancy to her death ; but, of course, much has been necessarily suppressed, and much more forgotten : the reader, therefore, must content himself with a less continuous narrative, which, it is hoped, will not prove uninteresting, and is, at all events, strictly true. The phraseology of the speaker is religiously preserved, as will be readily acknowledged by those who have known her. In many instances it is but little conformable with the present style of English conversation : but any alterations made in it, to suit the fastidiousness of some tastes, would, by destroying the fidelity of the picture, shake the authenticity of what remains.

I have touched slightly on Lady Hester Stanhope's religious opinions ; and although I am quite sure that a traveller was seldom, if ever, allowed to depart from

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

her presence without an insight into her sentiments on these points, even from the little I have said, it will be plain that not one has done her justice in speaking of them.

I sincerely trust that nothing will be found in the following pages which can with just cause wound the feelings of any *living* person : and it is to be borne in mind that chagrin and disappointment had soured Lady Hester's temper, and put her out of humour with all mankind ; so that her praise and blame must be received with all due reservation.

Before I conclude, I think it necessary to add a few lines respecting the last months of her existence. Lady Hester Stanhope died, as far as I have been able to learn, unattended by a single European, and in complete isolation. I was the last European physician or medical man that attended her, and I was most anxious and willing, (foreseeing her approaching fate as I did) to continue to remain with her : but it was her determined resolve that I should leave her, and those who have known her can not deny that opposition to her will was altogether out of the question.

There is no doubt that, by prolonging my stay on Mount Lebanon, I might have been of considerable

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

vii

service to her ladyship. She was about to shut herself up alone, without money, without books, without a soul she could confide in ; without a single European, male or female, about her ; with winter coming on, beneath roofs certainly no longer water-proof, and that might fall in ; with war at her doors, and without any means of defence except in her own undaunted courage ; with no one but herself to carry on her correspondence ; so that everything conspired to make it an imperative duty to remain with her : yet she would not allow me to do so, and insisted on my departure on an appointed day, declaring it to be her fixed determination to remain immured, as in a tomb, until reparation had been made her for the supposed insult she had received at the hands of the British government.

It would have been expected that the niece of Mr. Pitt, and the grand-daughter of the great Lord Chatham, might have laid claim to some indulgence from those whose influence could help or harm her ; and that her peculiar situation in a foreign country, among a people unacquainted with European customs and habits, (being left as she was to her own energies to meet the difficulties which encompassed her) might have exempted her from any annoyance, if it did not

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

PREFACE.

obtain for her any aid. A woman sixty years old, with impaired health, inhabiting a spot removed many miles from any town, amidst a population whom their own chiefs can hardly keep under control, was no fit object, one would think, for molestation under any circumstances; but, when the services of Lady Hester's family are put into the scale, it seems wonderful how the representations of interested money-lenders could have had sufficient weight with those who guided the State to induce them to disturb her solitude and retirement. Will it be believed that, when in August, 1838, I took leave of her, the beam of the ceiling of the saloon, in which she ordinarily sat, was propped-up by two unsightly spars of wood, for fear the ceiling should fall on her head; and that these deal pillars, very nearly in the rough state in which they had been brought from the North in some Swedish vessel, stood in the centre of the room? Her bed-room was still worse; for there the prop was a rough unplanned trunk of a poplar-tree, cut at the foot of the hill on which her own house stood.

It may be asked whether there were no carpenters or masons in that country? There certainly were both; but, where carriage is effected on the backs of camels

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

ix

and mules and there are no wheeled vehicles whatever, in a sudden emergency, (such as the cracking of a beam,) resort must be had to the most ready expedient for immediate safety ; and, with her resources cramped by the threatened stoppage of her pension, her ladyship could not venture on new-roofing her rooms—a work of time and expense.

The perusal of the narrative which is here submitted to the reader will sufficiently account for Lady Hester's debts, and the most cursory visit to her habitation at Jôon (or Djoun, as the French write it) would have proved to anybody that the money which she had borrowed was never expended on *her own* comforts :—a tradesman's wife in London had ten times as many. Having no other servants but peasants, although trained by herself, she could scarcely be said to have been waited on ; and a tolerable idea may be formed of their customary service, when an eye-witness can say that he has seen a maid ladling water out of a cistern with the warming-pan, and a black slave putting the teapot on the table, holding it by the spout, and the spout only.

But these were trifles, in comparison with the destruction and pilfering common to the negresses and peasant girls ; and so little possibility was there of

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

keeping any article of furniture or apparel for its destined purpose, that, after many years of ineffectual trouble, she, who was once, in her attire, the ornament of a court, might now be said to be worse clad than a still-room maid in her father's house. Her ladyship slept on a mattress, on planks upheld by tressels, and the carpeting of her bed-room was of felt. She proclaimed herself, with much cheerfulness, a philosopher; and, so far as self-denial went, in regard to personal sumptuousness, her assertion was completely borne out in garb and furniture. How far she deserved that title, upon the higher grounds of speculative science and the extraordinary range of her understanding, let those say who have shared with the writer in the profound impression which her conversation always left on the minds of her hearers.

Peace be with her remains, and honour to her memory! A surer friend, a more frank and generous enemy, never trod the earth. "Show me where the poor and needy are," she would say, "and let the rich shift for themselves!" As free from hypocrisy as the purest diamond from stain, she pursued her steady way, unaffected by the ridiculous reports that were spread about her by travellers, either malicious or misinformed, and not to be deterred from her noble,

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xi

though somewhat Quixotic enterprises, by ridicule or abuse, by threats or opposition.

I take this opportunity of thanking the Chevalier Henry Guys, French Consul at Aleppo, for the communication he so liberally made me of the correspondence between Lady Hester Stanhope and himself, and from which I have selected such letters as bore on the subjects noticed in the diary. The reader will form the best estimate of that gentleman's merits from a perusal of them.

THE AUTHOR.

London, June 18, 1845.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1
Charles Lewis Meryon
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory remarks—Correspondence 1

CHAPTER II.

Dr. M's. departure from England to join Lady Stanhope—
Voyage from Leghorn to Syria—The vessel plundered by a
Greek pirate—Return to Leghorn—Signor Girolamo—Letter
from Lady Stanhope to Mr. Webb, merchant at Leghorn—
Lady Stanhope persecuted by the Emir Beshýr—Letter from
Lady Stanhope to Dr. M., describing her position in 1837—
Her reliance on Providence—Second Letter to Mr. Webb—
Her opinion of the Turks and Christians in Syria, and of the
wild Arabs—Terror of the Franks in Syria, on occasion of
the battle of Navarino—They take refuge in Lady Stanhope's
house—The Franks in Syria—Her Letter to Dr. M., urging
him to rejoin her—Her advice—Her ladyship's illness—
Dr. M. sails for Syria 35

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER III.

Lady Stanhope's reception of Dr. M. — Her residence described — Supposed reasons for her seclusion — Her extraordinary influence over her dependants — Her violent temper — Dress and appearance — Her influence in the country — Abdallah Pasha guided by her — Her hostility towards the Emir Beshýr — Her defiance of his power — Her opinion of him — Flight of the Emir — His return — Death of the Sheykh Beshýr 77

CHAPTER IV.

Lady Hester Stanhope's hours of sleep — Her night-dress — Irksomeness of her service — Her bed-room — Her dislike to clocks — Her frequent use of the bell — Her aptitude in discovering and frustrating plots — Blind obedience required by her — Anecdote of Lord S. — Lady Hester's colloquial powers — Interminable length of her conversations — Peculiar charm of them — Her religious opinions — Her belief in supernatural agencies, and also of revealed religion — Certain doctrines of the sect of the Metoualis adopted by her . . . 117

CHAPTER V.

Buoyancy of Lady Hester Stanhope's spirits — Death of Miss Williams — Mrs. M's. first visit to Lady Hester — Doctor M. is summoned to Damascus to attend Hassan Effendi: declines going — Discussions between Lady Hester and Mrs. M. thereupon — Lady Hester's hatred of women — She sends her maid to revile Mrs. M. — Doctor M. resolves to return to England — Alarm from soldiers on their march — Lady Hester assists Abdallah Pasha in laying out his garden — Anecdotes of the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

xv

first Lord Chatham—Fresh discourses about the journey to Damascus—Anecdotes of Mr. Pitt—His attachment to Miss E.—His admiration of women—His indulgence towards other people's failings—Lady Hester and the fair Ellen—Strange history—Mr. Pitt's attention to the comfort of his guests, and of his servants—Strange rise of one of them—Lady Hester's pathos—Paolo Perini's expected post of artilleryman 151

CHAPTER VI.

Lady Hester Stanhope's belief in the coming of a Messiah—Her two favourite mares—Lady Hester's destiny influenced by Brothers, the fortune-teller, and by one Metta, a Syrian astrologer—Duke of Reichstadt—Madame de Feriat—Story of a Circassian slave—Rugged paths in Mount Lebanon—Anecdote of Lord and Lady Bute—Anecdote of Mr. A., afterwards Lord S.—His father's rise in the world—Lord Liverpool and the order of merit—Intimidation exercised over Dr. M.'s household by Lady Hester—Sundry difficulties arising therefrom—Lady Hester's opinion of X.'s mission—Mrs. Fry—Lady Hester's defiance of consular authority, and confidence in her own resources—Lunardi recommended as a servant—Dr. M. takes leave of Lady Hester—Conduct of the Franks at Sayda—Dr. M. sails for Cyprus—Is hospitably received by Mr. Hanah Farkouah, a Syrian, and by Signor Baldassare Mattei—Marine villa at Larnaka—Mr. George Robinson—Captain Scott—Captain Dundas—Mr. Burns—Dr. M. sails for Europe 195

CHAPTER VII.

Reflections—Letter from Lady Hester to Dr. M. asking him to return—He revisits Syria—Changes which had taken place

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi

CONTENTS.

in Beyrout—M. Jasper Chasseaud, American consul—Divine service performed by the American missionaries—Letter from Lady Hester to Dr. M.—Her continued hostility to Mrs. M.—Dr. M. takes his family to Sayda—Dress and demeanour of a lady of Sayda—Dr. M.'s reception at Jdon—His family frightened by a deserter—Settles at the convent of Mar Elias—Earthquake of January 1, 1837 237

CHAPTER VIII.

History of Râis Hassan—His influence with Lady Hester Stanhope—Number of persons in her service—Number of animals in her stables—Her manner of disposing of those which were superannuated—Her belief in Magic and Demonology—Examples—Anecdotes of Mr. Brummell—Mr. H.—The Duc de R*****—Lord St. Asaph—Lady Hester's strictness with menials—Justified by their misconduct and vices—Zeyneb, the black slave—Annoyances to which Lady Hester was subjected—Her service not tolerable for Europeans—Her reasons for using plain furniture—Her detestation of sentimentality—Her general interference in every department of housewifery—Irrregularities of the servants—Chastity how defined in Turkey—Lady H.'s measures for enforcing it—Her opinion of a French traveller, and of Mr. Lascaris 265

CHAPTER IX.

Queen Caroline's trial—In what manner the first inquiry was suppressed—Lady Hester's opinion of the P—ss of W.—Young Austin—Lord Y.—P. of W.—His disgust at the slovenly habits of the P—ss—Mrs. Fitzherbert—Mrs. Robinson—Mr. Canning—His person—His duplicity—and

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05208-5 - Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope: Volume 1

Charles Lewis Meryon

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

xvii

deceit — His incapability of acting without guidance — His disposition to babble—Lady Hester's account of a great serpent — Mr. T. Moore — Lord Camelford— His liberality — Some anecdotes of that high-spirited nobleman — Arrival of Madame L.—She is seized with brain-fever, and dies raving mad—Visit of General Cass 303

CHAPTER X.

Mrs. M.'s unwillingness to remain at Abra after Signora L.'s death—Beyrout fixed on as a residence—Lady H.'s account of her debts—Necessities to which she was reduced — Another version of her debts—Her extensive charities—Anecdote of Shaykh Omar-ed-dyn—Usurious discount on Lady H.'s bills of exchange—List of her creditors' names—Loss from the fluctuating value of money in the East—Estates supposed to have been bequeathed to Lady H. — Letters from Lady H. to M. Guys—She employs Sir Francis Burdett to inquire into the nature of the supposed bequests—Her opinion of Sir Francis—Letter to him—Lady H.'s diatribes on women — Mr. C.—Letter to Miss M.—Letter to Dr. M. 335

Additional Notes 385

ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. I.

Lady Hester Stanhope on Horseback . . . *Frontispiece.*
Ground plan of Lady Hester Stanhope's Residence at
Jéon *Page 87*

VOL. II.

Lady Hester Stanhope in her Saloon . . . *Frontispiece.*

VOL. III.

Distant View of Lady Hester Stanhope's Resi-
dence on Mount Lebanon . . . *Frontispiece.*