

SEVEN YEARS IN THE SOUDAN

BEING A RECORD OF
EXPLORATIONS, ADVENTURES, AND CAMPAIGNS
AGAINST THE ARAB SLAVE HUNTERS

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CHAPTER V.

HUNTING.

Two celebrated hunters—Nine elephants killed—The *Bordeen* goes to Gondokoro—On the Bahr-el-Ghazal—Plundering—We kill four buffaloes—My Reilly rifle—Difficult navigation—Hippopotami—One wounded—Thirty-seven great elephants—Twenty-three blacks assassinated—Flight—Mushra-el-Rek—Hunt with Anson and Haggi—Kempt and Gigler—Letter from Gordon—Enormous hippopotamus killed.

THE two brothers Duma live in a village of the interior five days' journey from Kaka. Their father had left them a modest fortune in oxen, but they had no inclination for a pastoral life. Their ruling passion and daily occupation was hunting and fishing. Gradually they disappeared from the village, whither they only returned last year after an absence of seven years. In the other villages, the brothers always found an enthusiastic welcome, the people knowing that, where they were, meat was never wanting. Both were strong-limbed and of uncommon agility, and generally joined the ivory merchants, who had to pay them a percentage on the elephant tusks according to the weight. When an elephant rushed upon them they calmly awaited him, and at the right moment leaped to one side. The elephant, not being able to arrest his course all of a sudden, turned towards one of the two brothers while the other plunged his lance into his side. The animal then quitted the first to fall upon the man who had wounded him, and the other cutting the tendons of the hind legs, the elephant fell to the ground. Once,

however, one of the brothers was very near falling a victim to his boldness. He attacked the elephant alone in the usual way, but stumbled and fell. He rose directly, but the elephant had already seized him in his trunk and hurled him to a distance of fifteen feet. Fortunately he fell into the middle of a thick bush, and thus escaped with some scratches and bruises. His friends laughed at the incident, and the following day he said, "I will rather eat my wife seven times than not take my revenge."

He set out again, refusing the company of his brother, and returning late in the evening called all the village together. "Come," he said, "help me to transport the tusks, and take as much meat for yourselves as you like."

All the population followed him. He had killed nine huge elephants.

But the fiercest animals are undoubtedly the buffalo, the rhinoceros and the leopard. These animals, so much feared by the natives, were attacked and killed by the two brothers with no more emotion than the hunters of hares experience with us. These two remarkable men were renowned from Kaka to the Victoria Nyanza. The elder of the two threw his lance with such precision that he rarely missed his aim at the tendons of the elephant's foot. Sometimes he was sent for from distant parts to kill some lion which did great mischief. Both men have gentle characters, and never refuse their aid to others. I left them at Kaka, whither they had gone, intending afterwards to go on the first occasion to Fashoda.

We must now resume our account of affairs at Khartoum.

While we were on the way the steamer *Barbican* left that town for Gondokoro. The *Barbican* had on board Mr. Kempt, engineer, and Mr. Russell, who was employed by Colonel Gordon.

A third steamer was likewise on the way to Gondo-

koro with Major Campbell of the Egyptian army on board, and Mr. Witt a German botanist. A fourth vessel carried Mr. Linant de Bellefonds, secretary and private interpreter to the Colonel. A fifth had started for Berber to embark Abu-Sud, who had been taken into the Colonel's service. I shall afterwards speak of this personage, who was rendered famous by the English press.

One of the principal objects of this expedition, as we have already said, was the suppression of the slave-trade. The Colonel did not therefore think of treaties, but went straight to his end, cutting off the evil at the very root and prohibiting the trade in ivory. A proclamation by the Commander-in-chief of the expedition, declared that from that day the article ivory was a Government monopoly; whoever possessed ivory must, by a certain date, deliver it up and dissolve the company of traders. This was a blow at the very heart of the slave-trade, and the merchants found themselves compelled to dismiss their men and implore the Government to buy up their cattle.

At the same time a station was established on the Sobat, a place where the *nugars* are compelled to pass, and here these vessels were subjected to rigorous examination. They must also make a halt at Fashoda to be visited, while seven steamers traverse the river up and down and render all smuggling impossible. Gondokoro was temporarily declared the head-quarters; Rejaf, Dufilè, Magungo, Fatico, and Makraka were occupied as military posts, and civil governors placed there; a regular communication connected all these ports with each other, and the slave-merchants were obliged to bow to the new authority. The abolition of their trade, in consequence of the ivory trade being made a monopoly, the dissolution of the companies, the installation of the new authorities, the pacification of the tribes, the organization of the land and river forces, was the work of four months.

Meanwhile I continued my journey to the Bahr-el-Ghazal.

This river has an imperceptible fall. We stopped in sight of an immense forest lying opposite the tribe of the Nuer. The captain of the *Saphia* had never been in these parts, nor had any steamer ventured to penetrate so far. Not knowing whether fuel could be found further on, Captain Hussein ordered the men to take in as much wood as the vessel could carry. We had hardly cast anchor when we perceived a hundred paces off some fifteen huts, which the natives, at sight of us, had abandoned in headlong haste, fearing that they would be captured and enslaved.

The crew of the vessel and the soldiers took possession of the tools of the natives to cut down the trees, but their first thought was to plunder the dwellings of these poor people. I immediately summoned them all before me, and ordered the return of the stolen articles, and my commands were promptly obeyed. I then asked them if they took me for a brigand-chief instead of an officer, and ordered everything to be restored to the place whence it was taken, warning all that the first who should attempt an act of plunder should be instantly shot.

The forest has the appearance of a park of immense tamarind and gum-trees, centuries old. I took my gun and tried to shoot a few guinea-fowl. The heat was excessive. I returned on board with the intention of resuming the chase with Haggi, who was busy making cartridges. While we were at dinner, a soldier came to say that he had seen several buffaloes in the neighbourhood. The temptation was too great. I landed with Haggi, and made the soldier lead us to the place. We were following the tracks of the buffaloes when a small but deep water-course blocked our way. We returned on board, and had ourselves taken to the other side of the brook, where we landed. We had not proceeded

two hundred steps, when I saw six fine male buffaloes. Hiding behind ant-hills, and taking advantage of the wind, which blew towards us, we slowly approached the animals. A soldier with a reserve gun was with us. When within eighty paces from the animals, they scented the danger, and the two on guard fixed their eyes in our direction. We waited behind a sugar-



A WOUNDED BUFFALO.

loaf-shaped ant-hill for half an hour, not daring to move for fear of scaring the game, when I changed my mind, and tried to reach another ant-hill a hundred feet away, from where I could have shot side-ways, taking advantage, as I supposed, of the bushes. Without being noticed by Haggi, to whom I had said nothing of my intention, I started for the place. When half-way between the two ant-hills I saw that

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH OF ANSON.

In the shadow of the tamarinds—Two lions in flight—Buffaloes and rhinoceroses—Wild oxen—Fever—Anson's death—Arrival of Gordon.

On July 10th I left the neighbourhood of Meshra ; the *Saphia* had hardly fuel enough to reach a large forest. The next day the vessel stopped, and the men were divided into two companies, one of which had to work under Anson's supervision and the other under mine.

I ordered breakfast to be served in the forest, and although even there the heat was excessive, we were better under the large tamarind trees than beneath the awning of the *Saphia*. At noon, having allowed the men two hours of repose, while I was sharing my frugal lunch with Anson, we suddenly heard a rustling noise, as of a number of large monkeys leaping from one bough to another. I had not paid much attention to it when Anson touched me and pointed to a spot in the wood. A lion with a splendid mane, followed by a lioness, was not more than sixty steps distant from us, and was stealing quietly along ; but when the animals saw they were noticed they quickened their pace and rushed away just like cats.

The temptation was indeed too strong and I set off in pursuit of them. Anson insisted on coming with me, and I consented unwillingly after much entreaty.

Taking with us a soldier, who carried a reserve rifle, we proceeded with all possible precautions. The ground was damp, and the lions had taken a path which bore the print of their footsteps. We had followed them thus for about twenty minutes when we saw that the path was abruptly lost in grass and bushes, and we were just consulting which direction to take when we heard a noise at a little distance. I imagined that we were already face to face with the lions, but instead of this I had roused a buffalo-bull who, being startled, took a leap of fifteen paces. Only a few bushes separated us from the animal and we were therefore plainly visible. Anson wanted to fire, but I prevented him; his small rifle and his little skill in aiming were sufficient motives for my interference. The buffalo halted for an instant, looking us full in the face, but the game was soon to be at an end. I took aim at him with the greatest calmness, and fired, when the buffalo fell, struck down as if by lightning. The explosive projectile had penetrated the brain, a part of which was liquefied by the force of it, and issued from the ear.

The gun had hardly been fired when the soldier saw the lion and lioness take to flight at eighty paces' distance.

Buffaloes are so abundant that one is almost certain to meet with some every time one goes to hunt. Since then I have killed four, and have taken a decided aversion to the buffalo, and in consequence have more than once abandoned a path marked with his traces. All animals flee before man, except the buffalo and the rhinoceros; these two have the same instinct, and if the wind brings to their nostrils the scent of a man, they turn to meet him. With the buffalo there is this advantage, that, when he means to attack, he halts at exactly fifteen paces' distance, gently lowers his head, and rushes forward at a gallop; one must seize the moment when he stands with his head lowered, otherwise it is too late. The native, when

followed by a buffalo, throws himself to the ground pretending to be dead. The buffalo comes up and sniffs at him for ten minutes, then, seeing him immovable, goes away. This I myself saw in the Bahr-el-Ghazal. A herd of buffaloes had caught sight of five natives, who instantly threw themselves on the ground. The buffaloes sniffed at them a good while, and then went away. It is worthy of note, and surprised me much to see, that the tetal, arjel, and gazelles, allow the negroes to approach within twenty paces, while, when they see a European at even two hundred paces, they fly precipitately. Can it be the smell of the powder, or the difference of complexion that inspires them with so much terror?

On July 12th I set out with Haggi to hunt, and we killed three wild oxen. I sent on board for a stove, for butter, salt, bread and two plates, while we quenched our thirst with the milk of a cow which probably had its young one not far off. A thunder-storm broke out unexpectedly, and such heavy rain fell that the drops seemed like bullets falling from the sky. In a few moments, notwithstanding that we had taken shelter under trees, we were as soaked through as if we had fallen into the river. When the torrents had ceased I directed my steps to the *Saphia*, followed by the soldiers laden with pieces of the ox. But on returning we mistook the road, and after having lost two good hours wandering about, we finally found ourselves on board at seven o'clock in the evening, tired and exhausted. We had left at five in the morning. Anson had not yet returned. I immediately sent some soldiers with orders to go inland for twenty minutes and fire shots that might serve him as a guide for finding his way. At last a distant shot replied to those of the soldiers, and shortly afterwards I saw him coming, quite delighted at having killed an antelope, but when the soldiers brought me the victim's skin I perceived that it was that of a young ox.

At midnight I was attacked with violent headache, and by morning I had a violent fever. I took a dose of quinine, but my stomach, though it was then of iron, could not digest it, and the fever continued for four consecutive days, during which time I lost all consciousness. I only remember that I awoke on the fifth day as weak as if I had been in bed several months. I continued nevertheless the treatment with the quinine, taking eighteen grains a day. On the 18th I began to improve, but was still very weak. Anson had nursed me as well as he could, but he had always been in great apprehension, fearing that I should not recover. The captain of the steamer had even spoken to him about how he was to bury me.

On the 18th Anson was also seized with violent headache, and immediately adopted my treatment. Three days before, we had left that unhealthy spot, and had arrived at the mouth of the White Nile, where we had to take in tow a dahabia which had on board the new governor of Gabe-Shambé, and towed three nugar laden with doora.

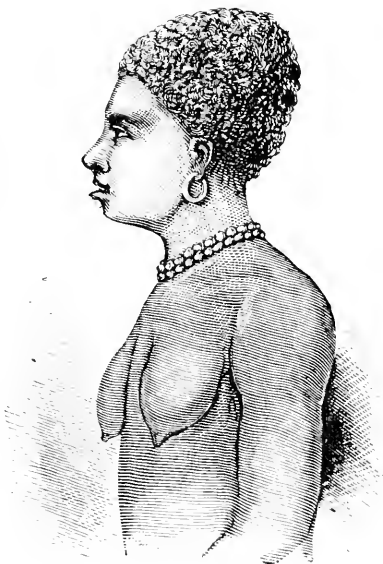
Poor Anson could not digest the medicine, and rejected it as soon as swallowed, as well as the lightest nourishment. Notwithstanding the state in which I was, I had myself carried near his bed, but his prostration increased, and he could not even swallow a few spoonfuls of tea. The malady grew worse with such rapidity on the night of the 27th of July that the next day at three in the afternoon Anson expired in my arms. One can imagine my sorrow in the state in which I was; I wept over his remains as if I had lost a brother. Poor Anson! he was hardly twenty-one, of a gentle and affectionate character. He always listened respectfully to my advice, though he was in a certain way independent of me. Since our departure from Cairo we had taken a strong liking to each other, and at Khartoum he had begged the Colonel to appoint him

At last we entered the village, and, the review of the troops being ended, we took up our abode in a vast building where we rested from our labours. To the south of Agar there dwells another tribe, called Atot, which is till now independent, and its presence renders travelling dangerous. The Government has not yet succeeded in subjugating it.

Rumbek was built twenty years ago by a Frenchman, Malzac, who occupied himself, like the Arabs, with collecting ivory and trading in slaves. This Frenchman is not the only one of his nation who has taken up this shameful trade, and I could quote many others, for example, Lafargue, Jules Ambroise, and a certain Alexandre. This last, to escape the search made for him, took the name of Yskender, the Turkish translation of Alexandre. Furthermore a French doctor, a certain Tirant, made his fortune at Khartoum with slaves who were sold in the markets of Cairo and Constantinople.

The fauna of Rohl Rumbek is represented by elephants, rhinoceroses, giraffes, buffaloes, wild boars, and a variety of antelopes. Among the carnivorous animals the lion, the leopard, the cheetah, and the hyena are found in great numbers. The ornithology is poor, except a few ostriches, spur-geese, and a variety of turtle doves and ducks.

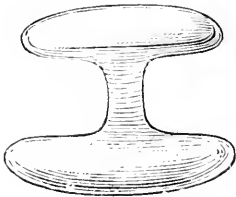
The agricultural products are very limited; except



A JUR WOMAN.

the doora, a little sesame, a quality of peas called ful, and sugar-canes, there is nothing. In the gardens we find some imported trees, oranges and lemons, some bananas and a tree which yields an exquisite fruit called by the Arabs Gista. In the woods are found the caoutchouc tree, but hitherto no one has thought of extracting its precious milk, so appreciated in Europe for the manufacture of a thousand articles. The soil is sandy, and, I believe, little adapted to the production of other plants. Manufactures are entirely wanting, and the population, women as well as men, go completely naked, the women only sometimes covering themselves with a leaf in the front and at the back.

At Rumbek one finds various specimens of different types assembled; indeed almost all the tribes of Bahr-el-Ghazal, the Jurs, the Macracas, the Gurguros, and the Niam-Niams, are represented there. The women of Jur are very tall in stature and large in size. They are distinguished by the mutilation they make of the lower lip to introduce a button made of the peel of gourds, which renders the lip protuberant, so that these women, who have good features, are horribly disfigured.



A LIP-BUTTON.

To-day arrived a courier from Shambé, bringing the news that the waters have risen, and that the steamer *Scabbin* on its way to Khartoum has been obliged to go back, having found the river barred by grasses and papyrus; the navigation therefore remains interrupted. If this is true, who knows when I shall have the satisfaction of getting news of my family and friends? No other resource remains to me but to send my letters by way of Meshra-el-Rek to Bahr-el-Ghazal, but I cannot adopt this course until I have asked that a steamer may be sent to me by way of Kordofan.