

# T R A V E L S

TO DISCOVER THE

SOURCE OF THE NILE,

IN THE YEARS

1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

BY JAMES BRUCE, OF KINNAIRD, ESQ. F. R. S.

V O L. V.

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*Nilus in extremum fugit perterritus orbem,  
Occulitque caput, quod albuc latet.*—

OVID. Metam.

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D U B L I N:

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MDCCKCI.

## C H A P. II.

*Reception at Tcherkin by Ozoro Esther, &c.—  
Hunting of the Elephant, Rhinoceros, and  
Buffalo.*

THE impatient Welleta Yafous would only give me time to see my quadrant and other instruments safely stowed, but hurried me through a very narrow and crooked path up the side of the mountain, at every turn of which was placed a great rock or stone, the station for musquets to enfilade the different stages of the road below, where it was strait for any distance. We at last reached the outer court, where we found the chamberlain Ammonios, whom Welleta Yafous had spoken of as being still at Gondar; but this did not surprise me, as he told me at the tent that Ayto Confu was arrived. I saw here a great many of my old acquaintance whom I had known at Ozoro Esther's house at Gondar, and who all welcomed me with the greatest demonstrations of joy, as if I had come from a long journey.

I was

I shall only take upon me to resolve a difficulty which he seems to have had,—for what use the teeth of the elephant, and the horns of the rhinoceros, were intended. He, with reason, explodes the vulgar prejudice, that these arms were given them by nature to fight with each other. He asks very properly, What can be the ground of that animosity? neither of them are carnivorous; they do not couple together, therefore are not rivals in love; and, as for food, the vast forests they inhabit furnish them with an abundant and everlasting store.

But neither the elephant nor rhinoceros eat grass. The sheep, goats, horses, cattle, and all the beasts of the country, live upon branches of trees. There are, in every part of these immense forests, trees of a soft, succulent substance, full of pith. These are the principal food of the elephant and rhinoceros. They first eat the tops of these leaves and branches; they then, with their horns or teeth, begin as near to the root as they can, and rip, or cut the more woody part, or trunks of these, up to where they were eaten before, till they fall in so many pliable pieces of the size of laths. After this, they take all these in their monstrous mouths, and twist them round as we could do the leaves of a lettuce. The vestiges of this process, in its different stages, we saw every day throughout the forest; and the horns of the rhinoceros, and teeth of the elephant, are often found broken, when their gluttony leads them to attempt too large or firm a tree.

We fought about for the buffaloes and rhinoceroses; but though there was plenty of both in the neighbourhood, we could not find them; our noise and shooting in the morning having probably scared them away. One rhinoceros only was seen by a servant. We returned in the evening to a great fire, and lay all night under the shade of trees. Here we saw them separate the great teeth of the elephant from the head, by roasting the jaw-bones on the fire, till the lower, thin, and hollow part of the teeth were nearly consumed; and then they came out easily, the thin part being of no value.

The next morning we were on horseback by the dawn of day in search of the rhinoceros, many of which we had heard make a very deep groan and cry as the morning approached; several of the Agageers then joined us, and after we had searched about an hour in the very thickest part of the wood, one of them rushed out with great violence, crossing the plain towards a wood of canes that was about two miles distance. But though he ran, or rather trotted, with surprising speed, considering his bulk, he was, in a very little time, transfixcd with thirty or forty javelins; which so confounded him, that he left his purpose of going to the wood, and ran into a deep hole, ditch, or ravine, a *cul de sac*, without outlet, breaking above a dozen of the javelins as he entered. Here we thought he was caught as in a trap, for he had scarce room to turn; when a servant, who had a gun, standing directly over  
him

him, fired at his head, and the animal fell immediately, to all appearance dead. All those on foot now jumped in with their knives to cut him up, and they had scarce begun, when the animal recovered so far as to rise upon his knees; happy then was the man that escaped first; and had not one of the Agageers, who was himself engaged in the ravine, cut the sinew of the hind-leg as he was retreating, there would have been a very sorrowful account of the foot-hunters that day.

After having dispatched him, I was curious to see what wound the shot had given, which had operated so violently upon so huge an animal; and I doubted not it was in the brain. But it had struck him nowhere but upon the point of the foremost horn, of which it had carried off above an inch; and this occasioned a concussion that had stunned him for a minute, till the bleeding had recovered him. I preserved the horn from curiosity, and have it now by me†. I saw evidently the ball had touched no other part of the beast.

While we were busy with the rhinoceros, Ammonios joined us. A message from the king had carried away Azage Kyrillos the secretary. Two other messengers had arrived from the queen, one to Ayto Confu, and another to Ozoro Epher; and it was Ozoro Epher's commands to her son, to leave the hunting and return. There was no remedy but to obey: Ammonios, however, wanted to have his part of the

hunting

† See the article Rhinoceros in the Appendix.

hunting; and the country people told us, that multitudes of buffaloes were to be found a little to the westward, where there were large trees and standing pools of water. We agreed then to hunt homeward, without being over-solicitous about returning early.

We had not gone far before a wild boar arose between me and Ayto Engedan, which I immediately killed with my javelin. Before he, on his horse, came up to it, another of its companions shared the same fate about a quarter of an hour after. This was the sport I had been many years used to in Barbary, and was infinitely more dextrous at it than any of the present company; this put me more upon a par with my companions, who had not failed to laugh at me, upon my horse's refusal to carry me near either to the elephant or rhinoceros. Nobody would touch the carcase of the boar after it was dead, being an animal which is considered as unclean.

Ammonios was a man of approved courage and conduct, and had been in all the wars of Ras Michael, and was placed about Ayto Confu, to lead the troops, curb the presumption, and check the impetuosity of that youthful warrior. He was tall, and awkwardly made; slow in speech and motion, so much as even to excite ridicule; about sixty years of age, and more corpulent than the Abyssinians generally are; in a word, as pedantic and grave in his manner as it is possible to express. He spent his whole leisure time in reading the scripture, nor did he willingly dis-  
course

they go home, and tie the fillet about their own child's arm; certain, as they say, from long experience, that the child infected is to do well, and not to have one more than the number of pustules that were agreed and paid for. There is no example, as far as I could learn, either here or in Abyssinia, of this disease returning, that is, attacking any one person more than once.

The trade of Sennaar is not great; they have no manufactures, but the principal article of consumption is blue cotton cloth from Surat. Formerly, when the ways were open, and merchants went in caravans with safety, Indian goods were brought in quantities to Sennaar from Jidda, and then dispersed over the black country. The return was made in gold, in powder called Tibbar, civet, rhinoceros's horns, ivory, ostrich feathers, and above all, in slaves or glass, more of which was exported from Sennaar than all the east of Africa together. But this trade is almost destroyed, so is that of the gold and ivory. However, the gold still keeps up its reputation of being the purest and best in Africa, and therefore bought at Mocha to be carried to India, where it all at last centers. If the wakea of Abyssinian gold sells at 16 patakas, the Sennaar gold sells at the same place for 22 patakas. The ivory sells at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz.\* per rotol at Cairo, which is about 25 per cent lighter than the rotol of Mocha. Men-slaves, at a medium, may be about a wakea per head at Sennaar.

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\* Ounce of gold is here meant.

rather better than to suffer a slave like you to lay his filthy hands on a stranger like me."—"No! No! Mallem, says the man that spoke Italian, we will do you no harm. Ismael, that you brought from Habesh, has been with the Bey, and he wants to see you; and that is all."—Then stay without, said I, till I am ready, and I will come to you presently."

Out they went: I heard them crying to the Caloyeros for drink, but they never in their lives were in a place where they could address themselves worse for either meat or liquors; on the other hand, I did not keep them long in dressing. I had no shirt on, nor had I been master of one for fourteen months past. I had a waistcoat of coarse, brown, woollen blanket, trowsers of the same, and an upper blanket of the same wrapt about me, and in these I was lying. I had cut off my long beard at Furfhout, but still wore prodigious mustachoes. I had a thin, white, muslin cloth round a red Turkish cap, which served me for a night-cap, a girdle of coarse woollen cloth that wrapt round my waist eight or ten times, and swaddled me up from the middle to the pit of my stomach, but without either shoes or stockings. In the left of the girdle I had two English pistols mounted with silver, and on the right hand a common crooked Abyssinian knife, with a handle of a rhinoceros horn. Thus equipt, I was ushered by the banditti, in a dark and very windy night, to the door of the convent.

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