

Edited by S. SLEIS

A

VOYAGE TO ABYSSINIA.

BY FATHER JEROME LOBO,
A PORTUGUESE MISSIONARY.

CONTAINING THE
HISTORY, NATURAL, CIVIL, AND ECCLESIASTICAL,
OF THAT REMOTE AND UNFREQUENTED COUNTRY,

Continued down to the beginning of the *Eighteenth Century*:

WITH

FIFTEEN DISSERTATIONS

On various SUBJECTS,

RELATING TO THE ANTIQUITIES, GOVERNMENT, RELIGION,
MANNERS, AND NATURAL HISTORY, OF ABYSSINIA.

BY M. LE GRAND.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

Samuel Johnson, LL. D.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

VARIOUS OTHER TRACTS.
BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

Not Published by Sir JOHN HAWKINS or Mr STOCKDALE.

London:

IV, 248, 500
~~248, 500~~ D.

PRINTED FOR ELLIOT AND KAY, N^o 332. STRAND,
AND C. ELLIOT, EDINBURGH.

M, DCC, LXXXIX.

A

DESCRIPTION

OF

A B Y S S I N I A.

C H A P. I.

The History of Abyssinia. An account of the queen of Sheba, and of queen Candace. The conversion of the Abyssins.

THE original of the Abyssins, like that of all other nations, is obscure and uncertain. The tradition generally received derives them from Cham the son of Noah; and they pretend, however improbably, that from his time till now, the legal succession of their kings hath never been interrupted; and that the supreme power hath always continued in the same family. An authentic genealogy, traced up so high, could not but be extremely curious: and with good reason might the emperors of Abyssinia boast themselves the most illustrious and ancient family in the world. But there are no real grounds for imagining that Providence has vouchsafed them so distinguishing a protection; and from the wars with which this empire hath been shaken in these

later

way, we were in a great perplexity a long time what measures to take ; at length, having implored the protection of that providence that superintends the whole creation, we went forwards through the midst of them, without any injury. Once we met four young elephants, and an old one that played with them, lifting them up with her trunk ; they grew enraged on the sudden, and ran upon us ; we had no way of securing ourselves but by flight, which, however, would have been fruitless, had not our pursuers been stopped by a deep ditch. The elephants of Ethiopia are of so stupendous a size, that when I was mounted on a large mule, I could not reach with my hand within two spans of the top of their backs. In Abyssinia is likewise found the rhinoceros, a mortal enemy to the elephant. In the province of Agaus has been seen the unicorn, that beast so much talked of, and so little known ; the prodigious swiftness with which this creature runs from one wood into another has given me no opportunity of examining it particularly ; yet I have had so near a sight of it, as to be able to give some description of it. The shape is the same with that of a beautiful horse, exact and nicely proportioned, of a bay colour, with a black tail, which in some provinces is long, in others very short ; some have long manes hanging to the ground. They are so timorous, that they never feed but surrounded with other beasts that defend them. Deer and other defenceless animals often herd about the elephant, which, contenting himself with roots and leaves, preserves those beasts that place themselves, as it were, under his protection, from the rage and fierceness of others that would devour them.

The horses of Abyssinia are excellent ; their mules, oxen and cows, are without number ; and in these principally consists the wealth of this country. They have a
very

DISSERTATION
ON THE
EASTERN SIDE OF AFRICA,
FROM
MELINDA TO THE STRAIT OF BABELMANDEL.

THE country into which father Jerome Lobo went in quest of a passage into Ethiopia, is so little known to us, that I cannot think it impertinent to enlarge a little upon what he hath told us.

The viceroys of the Indies have had formerly governments of very large extent subordinate to them, in which deputies were placed under the title of Captain-Generals. He that commanded in the Isle of Ceylon styled himself king of Malyana. The other governments were Malaca, Ormus, and Mozambique, which is the only one which the Portuguese have now left them ; having lost Malaca, Ceylon, and the Spice Islands, to the Dutch, and Ormus being retaken by the Persians, assisted by the English.

The Isle of Mozambique, with which I shall begin first, lies in 15 degrees south. It is half a league in length, and a quarter in breadth : the citadel which defends the port, being placed at the mouth of it, is one of the best in the Indies, having four large towers,

bold, nor doth the tortoise if once seized make any resistance.

Of the river-horse, so much hath been said already that little needs be added to the former description: his teeth are more valuable than elephants, because they are whiter, and preserve their whiteness longer. These creatures are found not only under the line, but even in the polar circle, where they hide themselves under the ice. As to the elephant, scarce a traveller who has seen the eastern parts of the world has forgot to tell us of his sagacity; and therefore any thing here would be unnecessary. Although all the Portuguese writers have reckoned the rhinoceros among the animals of Ethiopia, yet none of them affirm that they have seen him, or been eye-witnesses of the dreadful combats between him and his irreconcileable enemy the elephant.

Some of them confound him with the abada, or bada, of which father John dos Santos hath written very largely. The abada has two horns; one planted on his forehead about two feet long, of a blackish colour, smooth, and very sharp, with the point a little turned upward; the other on the hinder part of his head, thicker and longer; he is about the bigness of a colt of two years old. His bones powdered and mingled with water, make a cataplasm of wonderful efficacy, which draws the poison out of any wound, and entirely cures it.

The zeura is a creature peculiar to Abyssinia; his whole body is diversified with black and white streaks of an equal breadth, which are as soft as silk; he has a kind of wool about his feet; when he runs he puts his head between his legs, and at first kicks out his heels very much. The Emperor of Abyssinia frequently