

NEW
TRAVELS

INTO THE

INTERIOR PARTS

OF

A F R I C A,

BY THE WAY OF

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE,

IN THE YEARS 1783, 84 AND 85.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF LE VAILLANT.

ILLUSTRATED WITH A MAP, DELINEATING THE ROUTE OF
HIS PRESENT AND FORMER TRAVELS, AND WITH
TWENTY-TWO OTHER COPPER-PLATES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

L O N D O N:

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sage I had an opportunity of seeing. As the country had nothing to induce them to descend, none of them stopped. My hunting excursions, therefore, were become tiresome; and my collections did not increase so much as I wished.

With regard to the animals that were to supply the considerable consumption made daily by my company, I could depend neither on giraffes, buffaloes, nor the rhinoceros, which, being too wild, could not be approached. My whole resource, therefore, was in the antelopes; but, though I had in no part seen so many, and though they wandered here in immense flocks, I found it very difficult to get near them.

While under this embarrassment, Haripa, who thought himself much indebted to me for the presents I had given him, and who from gratitude and attachment accompanied me every where, promised, if I would follow his advice, and hunt after the Koraqua manner, to afford me an opportunity of killing; without quitting the spot, more game than would be sufficient for all my company during a whole moon. This extraordinary promise appeared to me

stones ; and neither we nor our dogs durst venture to approach him. I wished to put an end to his torment, by firing one more ball, and was making preparations for the purpose, when my people entreated me to desist. As I could not ascribe their request to sentiments of pity, I was at a loss to conceive what could be their motive.

I have already said, that all the savage tribes, and even the people at the Cape and in the colonies, set a high value on the dried blood of the rhinoceros, to which they ascribe great virtues in the cure of certain disorders, and which they consider, in particular, as a sovereign remedy for obstructions. The reader will recollect, that when Swanepoel, intoxicated by Pinar, fell under the wheels of my carriage, and had one of his ribs broken, he asked me for the blood of the rhinoceros ; but, as none of it could be had, he drank some brandy in its stead. Nature alone effected a cure ; but he ascribed it to the liquor, and acknowledged that this remedy, equally proper, he said, for the sick and the sound, was preferable to the other. His companions, however, had retained their prepossession ; and they were determined

to have a store of rhinoceros-blood. The animal had lost a great deal by his wounds. It was with much regret that they saw the earth moistened with it around him ; and they were apprehensive that a new wound would increase that loss.

Scarcely had the animal breathed his last, when, both old and new Hottentots, all approached with eagerness, in order to collect the blood. With that view they cut open its belly, and took out the bladder, which they emptied. One of them then applied the mouth of it to one of the wounds, while the rest shook a leg of the animal to make the blood flow more readily. In a little time, to their great joy, the bladder was filled ; and I am persuaded that with what was lost they might have filled twenty.

I had approached the body also, but with a different design ; for my intention was only to measure and examine it. The savages of the horde, accustomed to see such animals very often, assured me that it was one of the largest of its species. I, however, did not believe them ; and what induced me to doubt their information was, that its principal horn was

only [in French measure] nineteen inches three lines in length ; and I had seen horns much longer in the possession of some of the Dutch planters. The height of the animal was seven feet five inches, and its length, from the snout to the root of the tail, eleven feet six inches.

Respecting the African rhinoceros, Dr. Sparmann has published a learned dissertation, as valuable for the researches he made, as for the truth and correctness of the facts he relates. To attempt to speak of the animal after him would be exposing myself to repetition, or to the shame of being accounted a plagiarist. I regret, however, that a work in which the rhinoceros is so well described should be accompanied with so faulty a figure.

I allude only to the engravings published in the French and Dutch translations. Having never seen the Swedish original, I do not know whether it be equally defective ; and under that uncertainty I shall one day publish a drawing of the animal, such as I took it from nature. In the translation of Bruce's Travels into Abyssinia, there is another figure of the two-horned rhinoceros ; but it is faulty also ; as
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the French engraver has improperly given it the folds of the one-horned rhinoceros, which it certainly has not, at least in the southern part of Africa: and that these animals are so formed in Abyssinia, I very much doubt.

In speaking of Quammedaka, a canton situated to the east, Mr. Sparmann says, "that it is the principal abode of the two-horned rhinoceros." The author is here mistaken; but his error is the more pardonable, as he had not an opportunity of visiting countries which would have afforded him better information.

The tiger, the lion, and other quadrupeds, which live upon prey, frequent districts where flocks are fed, and which produce an abundance of wild animals. With the rhinoceros the case is different. As his food, like that of the elephant, consists in vegetables, which are every where to be found, and as he is still more savage, he removes, like the elephant, from all inhabited places.

It may be readily perceived, therefore, that with such habits, instead of preferring for his residence a peopled district, interspersed with farms, like that of Quammedaka, he ought on the contrary to avoid it. If from time to time

some few are seen there, they are, as one may say, lost travellers, which, being soon discovered and pursued by the inhabitants, are either killed or obliged to seek their native country as fast as possible.

If there were abundance of rhinoceroses in Quammedaka in the time of Dr. Sparmann, there were none there in my time, any more than in the colony itself, which they deserted in proportion as it began to be better peopled.

“Bontius,” adds Mr. Sparmann, “remark-
“ed long ago, that the rhinoceros is generally
“killed with powder and ball. Buffon, pro-
“bably, did not pay attention to this passage,
“when he asserts, on the authority of Ger-
“vaise, that the skin of the rhinoceros cannot
“be pierced by any ball.”

If we can give credit to certain travellers, the one-horned rhinoceros, the scaly skin of which is folded back on the neck, in the form of a mantelet, is so hard that it withstands a musket shot; and it is probably this species to which Buffon alludes.

For my part, I am acquainted with those only of Southern Africa, and never saw any but the two-horned rhinoceros, which has a smooth
skin

skin like the elephant. No other kind is known at the Cape and in the colonies; and with regard to this species, its skin is not proof against ball; as is proved by the hunt of which I have here given the history; and I am persuaded, that the case is the same with the one-horned rhinoceros.

The small horn of the one we killed was a third shorter than the other. I have already remarked, that the large one was nineteen inches in length; but what surprised me was to find that this so formidable weapon, with which he ploughed up the earth to a great depth, and threw around him very large stones, was not implanted in the bone of the head; that it adhered only to the skin, and that when the skin was shaken, it moved also.

The eye of the rhinoceros, much too small in proportion to so enormous a body, is sunk very deep into the head; because the external skin, raised round the orbit in several circular folds, forms a tube some inches in length, at the bottom of which it is placed,

This tube, by diminishing the field of sight and concentrating the visual rays, may perhaps serve to strengthen the organ; but it prevents

the animal from seeing any other objects than those which are in the direction of its eye. The savages, therefore, when not in that direction, think themselves in safety, even when very near the animal, because he cannot then observe them.

A singular peculiarity of the two-horned rhinoceros is, that he ploughs up the ground with his horn as he runs along, and at the same time throws his urine to a great distance behind him, making a kind of kicking with his feet. Another remarkable custom of this animal is that of beating to pieces with his feet his excrements, which he never leaves whole like the elephant.

Though the flesh of the rhinoceros does not approach that of the hippopotamus, it is far superior to that of the elephant.

My savages promised themselves a delicious feast; and the idea alone of this treat was more than an equivalent for all the dangers to which they had been exposed. What enjoyment to them was an animal which weighed at least two or three thousand pounds! As night was approaching, and as they wished to have their feast that evening, they all immediately

diately began to cut from it such pieces as they liked. In less than an hour, each had his load; nor did the carcase appear to be in the least diminished; but they proposed to return to it the next and following days with all their companions, in order to cut it up completely.

I had resolved to return along with them, in hopes that this immense body might attract some birds of prey, which I should be able to procure without much difficulty; but, when I was preparing to depart, my attention was attracted by melodious strains, such as I had never heard, which proceeded from all parts of the banks of the river. I advanced, therefore, under the trees, and actually discovered a number of birds, with which I had till that moment been unacquainted. By thus passing suddenly from the hunting of quadrupeds to the pursuit of birds, I gave some rest to my imagination fatigued with carnage; and I saw diminished, in the proportion of the objects, that natural horror and disgust which it often excited. Frequently I turned my eyes upon the verdure and the flowers; and if any portion of disgust, inseparable from a wandering and solitary existence, happened to surprise
me

in combat is particularly exercised in their hunting excursions, and above all against carnivorous animals. Intrepid, however, as it may be to attack the elephant and the rhinoceros, these species of animals are not objects of their vengeance; because, living upon grass and herbs, they have nothing to apprehend from them, either for themselves or their cattle. But the tiger, lion, hyæna, and panther, being enemies of a different kind, they declare against them implacable war, and pursue them without remission.

Of the spoils of these destructive animals they form their bucklers, girdles, sandals, krosses, mantles, &c. They consider it as a mark of honour to wear them; and they set a much higher value upon them than upon the skin of the rhinoceros or of the elephant. If they sometimes hunt the latter, it is only as objects of food; and they employ to catch them these concealed pits, which are the usual snares of the Hottentots: but this method, which requires both patience and labour, is very little suited to a people so brave and enterprising as the Kabobiquas.

Keen and resolute hunters, they add to native
valour

enemy, is to compare his strength with that of his antagonist ; and, if he find them very unequal, the danger to which he is exposed must necessarily have its weight with him. This at least I have always experienced, and certainly I do not think myself more of a coward than another man. Accordingly, whenever I have found myself “ face to face ” with an elephant, a rhinoceros, a tiger, a lion, or the like, I confess, notwithstanding my confidence in my weapons, far from feeling myself, at the first instant, totally devoid of alarm : I have always experienced a violent palpitation, a sensation closely allied to fear. But this is of short duration, and has never deterred me from the attack, well assured of the superiority given me by my prudence and arms. Then, laying aside every idea of danger, I have marched straight forward to my enemy, however formidable he may be, and, if a wild beast, have thought only of killing, wounding, or at least putting him to flight.

To wait in ambush for a lion, and fire at him as he passes by, is an enterprise not without danger ; but to attack in “ face ” a lioness attended by her whelps and their father, and in
her