

A  
NATURALIST  
IN  
THE TRANSVAAL.

BY  
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WITH COLOURED PLATES AND ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS

"Bumble retains her toil, despite our clamours:  
That which she doth not willingly display  
Cannot be extracted from her with levers, screws, and hammers."  
— 'Faust' (Bayard Taylor's Transl.).

LONDON:  
18 PRINCES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE, W.  
1892.

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how a species may disappear\*. In South Africa more than one species of Buck and Antelope is rapidly approaching the same fate; and if it would be exaggeration to say the days, we may safely affirm that the years of the African Lion are numbered.

There are now five routes for reaching the Transvaal from South Africa. The first is from Cape Town direct:

	miles.
Cape Town to Kimberley (rail) . . . . .	647
† Kimberley to Fourteen Streams (coach) . . . . .	47
Fourteen Streams to Klerksdorp .. . . .	110
Klerksdorp to Potchefstroom .. . . .	31
Potchefstroom to Johannesburg .. . . .	80

Total miles . . . . . 915

This is the quickest and favourite passenger route from England, and with it we may describe what is usually a heavy-goods route, and by way of Port Elizabeth:

	miles.
Port Elizabeth to Kimberley (rail) . . . . .	485
Coach journey as detailed in Cape route . . . . .	268

Total miles . . . . . 753

The next route *via* Bloemfontein from Port Elizabeth, recently opened, is now being pushed to the Vaal River to meet the connection from Johannesburg; but before this can be done nearly a dozen either large rivers or spruits‡ have to be bridged over:

	miles.
Port Elizabeth to Colesberg (rail) . . . . .	305
Colesberg to Norval's Pont (Orange River) . . . . .	23
Norval's Pont to Bloemfontein (rail) . . . . .	121
Bloemfontein to Johannesburg (coach) . . . . .	250

Total miles . . . . . 699

\* In 'Nature,' vol. xlii. p. 520, Dr. Schuter has written on this matter and figured both the heads of *R. simus* and the common species *R. bicornis*.

† The rail now extends to Vryburg, by which the amount of coach-travelling is diminished.

‡ A "spruit" is a small stream or rivulet.

not calmed by the reflection that in the early days of discovery it took the Portuguese a hundred years with innumerable expeditions to double the same. Cape Town, with its thriving business community and its good shops, reminds one of a flourishing seaside town in England. The fishing-quarters are inhabited chiefly by Malays\*, who seem, from long residence, to have quite lost the purity of their mother tongue, and the Malay women, in their best attire, affect a European costume, in which an enormous and hideous bloomer-skirt is the strongest point, a strange and unpleasant contrast to the graceful sarong I remembered in the Malay Peninsula. The South-African Museum, presided over by my old friend Roland Trimen, leaves nothing to be desired but greater space and more available funds for the acquisition of fresh specimens. One can form no adequate conception of the South-African fauna from the present compulsory crowded contents of this building. The arrangement of a museum should be the reflection of a man's grasp of Zoology, but a curator has no opportunity of displaying the same if sufficient space is not at his disposal. A local museum should perhaps follow the ideal of a man's knowledge, to know a little about everything, and everything about something: so it might be somewhat weak in several groups, but very strong and exhaustive in one particular branch of Natural History. This is the case here, for Mr. Trimen is a Lepidopterist, and the collection of butterflies is the most complete and better worked out than in any other of our colonial museums. Mr. Trimen is the head of a "White House" (*White House*). This now practically has been shot by living sportsmen in any zoological menagerie, and its skin or skeleton is unknown in any museum, and is a good illustration in the present day of

\*The large body of Malay Musulmans at the Cape have of late years been under the patronage of the Sultan. A school has also been founded at Atholby by the Sultan, which, after him, has been named Hamidich Atholby. (Oct 17, 1861).