

AN

AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

OF

SIR JOHN BARROW, BART.,
((
LATE OF THE ADMIRALTY;

INCLUDING

REFLECTIONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND REMINISCENCES
AT HOME AND ABROAD,
FROM EARLY LIFE TO ADVANCED AGE.

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——— “Hæc olim meminisse juvabit.”  
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LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

—
1847.

tone, "I should not wonder if the two turn out to be one and the same—that on the table is a present from Sir George Staunton." The laugh, of course, was against me.

On the 5th of December we left the river, and directed our course to the southward over a level country, as far as the *Zuure-berg*, or Sour Mountain, from whence the waters flow in opposite directions; those taking a northerly course fall into the Orange River; the other united streamlets flow to the southward into the Great Fish River, the southern boundary of the colony and the Kaffirs. A little beyond this we discharged our party of boors; and, with the intention of skirting the colony to the eastward, we took another party better acquainted with that part of the country.

We entered the division of *Tarka*, close to a lofty mountain named the Bambosberg, from which proceeds a chain of mountains; in one of these we discovered a cavern full of drawings of animals of the larger kind, such as elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotami, and, among the rest, one of the giraffe. The Bosjesmen had told us that the people, who make these drawings, live on the other side of the Great River, which may account for the drawing of an animal never found on the south side of that river. From hence we made a long excursion in the Tarka Mountains: our object was to find, as we were frequently told there is, the drawing of an animal with a single horn. One of our party said he would conduct us to a cavern where drawings of many animals were on its sides. At the place indicated, we found sketches of several animals, and among them one of the giraffe. Still the object of our search was wanting, and our farmers seemed to be

as anxious as ourselves that what they had told us should turn out to be true.

We therefore continued our search in the mountains, and came, in one of them, to a deep cavern, the front of it covered with shrubbery. One of the boors mounted up the steep ascent, and having made his way through the brushwood, he called out that the sides of the cavern were covered with drawings. I ascended, and having got the bushes partly cleared away to let in light, numerous drawings made their appearance: some tolerably well executed, and among them was part of a figure evidently meant to represent an animal with a horn projecting from its forehead: all the body was covered by the figure of an elephant painted over it. The resemblance of the head to that fanciful animal which we call an unicorn may, perhaps, have been sketched by some of the boors; but that there is a beast in Southern Africa, with a single horn on his forehead, there can be no doubt; or that one species of the rhinoceros, in Southern Africa, is a monoceros; for one of the missionaries brought to England the horn of one he had met with to the northward of the Orange River, which I saw, and which I think was about two feet in length. It is now fifty years since the present reminiscences were originally written; but no other unicorn has since been discovered, except the one-horned rhinoceros above-mentioned. In a letter from Lord Macartney to Sir George Staunton, dated *Castle of Good Hope, July 24th, 1798*, is the following:—

“ I must not forget to tell you that, from what I hear, I am almost persuaded of the existence of the unicorn, ten feet high; the horn of brown ivory, two and a half feet long, twisted, and tapering to the point,

thick at the root as a man's arm, and thick as a man's finger at the end; hoofs and tail like a bullock's; a black short mane; skin like a horse's—colour white, watered with black (I have a pair of slippers, said to be made of it); very fierce; roots up trees with its horn, and feeds on the boughs; an object of worship to the inhabitants, &c. I have just put down these loose particulars, as asserted to belong to this wonderful animal. I am using my best endeavours to come to the truth of the matter, and I shall send it to you when cleared up."

I was at this time absent, for in the same letter it is stated—"Mr. Barrow left us on the 1st of this month on a very distant excursion, which I flatter myself will prove of some amusement to him, as well as of benefit to the public," &c.

In another letter, of a date just one year later, his Lordship is pleased to say (what, as an autobiographer, I am justified in quoting), "Mr. Barrow is returned from his northern tour, which completes his Hottentot travels; and I do believe that no person, whether native or foreigner, has seen so much of the country, or seen it so well, and to such good purpose, as he has done. I imagine his travels will be a great acquisition to the world. His map must be particularly valuable, as it is the only one that can at all be depended on. Every one that I have yet seen published is strikingly erroneous, and shamefully executed," &c.

On proceeding to the southward, little occurred that was curious or amusing. Near the junction of a stream with the Great Fish River, we observed a vast quantity of the tall spreading mimosa, scattered over the face of the country, and in full blossom, with clusters of golden