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NARRATIVE OF AN EXPLORER IN  
TROPICAL SOUTH AFRICA

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF A VISIT TO

*DAMARALAND IN 1851*

BY

FRANCIS GALTON, F.R.S.

WITH A NEW MAP, AND AN APPENDIX, BRINGING UP THE HISTORY  
OF DAMARALAND TO A RECENT DATE.

*Together with a Biographical Introduction by the Editor.*

ALSO

*VACATION TOURS IN 1860 AND 1861*

BY

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the most civilised of all I had seen, and seemed possessed of more resources by far than either Swartboy's or Cornelius'. I mean that, with the usual articles of exchange, whatever was wanted, might be found and bought there with far more facility than elsewhere. The others keep no "stock in hand" of anything, but scramble on from hand to mouth. If you want a pair of leather trousers made, the goat must be killed and the skin dressed, for nobody cares to keep a spare piece of leather. In the same way with carosses, each man has his own sleeping things, but no overplus by him to sell. Every Hottentot has his ride-ox, which he will not dream of parting with until he has broken in another one to take its place, and there is a want of capital everywhere, so that although a traveller may be abundantly supplied with articles of exchange, and the natives around him by no means badly off, yet it does not at all follow that he will find anybody to barter with him as he journeys through their country.

*September 24th.*—We left 'Twas on our shooting excursion. I took no dogs; mine were useless curs for anything else but night-watching; and under the guidance of Saul we travelled five hours and a half, passing a succession of little springs on our way. Early the next morning we went three hours to the place of rendezvous, and Amiral came shortly afterwards: numbers of other Hottentots soon dropped in, and we had a very merry evening, telling tales, and talking about the habits of animals. Of course we had lion and elephant stories in abundance. I was curious to know what animals here were the most fatal to man, and we counted over all the deaths that we could think of. Buffaloes (though not common here) killed the most, then rhinoceroses, and lastly, lions. Areep, the predecessor of Cornelius, as chief of his tribe, was killed by a black rhinoceros. It is curious how many people are wounded by lions, though not killed. A very active Damara, who was some time with me in Damaraland, but who stayed behind as I journeyed up the country, was in a dreadfully mangled state when I returned. He had found a lion in the act of striking down his ox, and rushed at him with his assegai: he gave him a wound that must have proved mortal, for the assegai went far into his side; but the lion turned upon him, and seizing him, bit one elbow-joint quite through, and continued worrying him until some other Damaras ran up and killed the animal.

My servant, Hans, had a very narrow escape some time since. He was riding old Frieschland (the most useful ox I had, but now worn

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out by the Ondonga journey) along the Swakop, when he saw something dusky by the side of a camelthorn-tree, two hundred yards off. This was a lion, that rose and walked towards him: Hans had his gun in his gun-bag by the side of his saddle, and rode on, for there is no use in provoking hostilities single-handed with a lion, unless some object has to be gained by it, as every sportsman at last acknowledges. The coolest hand and the best shot are never safe, for a bullet, however well aimed, is not certain to put the animal *hors de combat*. After the lion had walked some twenty or thirty yards, Frieschland, the ox, either saw or smelt him, and became furious. Hans had enough to do to keep his seat; for a powerful long-horned ox tossing his head about and plunging wildly is a most awkward hack for the best of jockeys. The lion galloped up. He and Hans were side by side. The lion made his spring, and one heavy paw came on the nape of the ox's neck, and rolled him over; the other clutched at Hans' arm, and tore the sleeve of his shirt to ribbons but did not wound him, and there they all three lay. Hans, though he was thrown upon his gun, contrived to wriggle it out, the lion snarling and clutching at him all the time; but for all that, he put both bullets into the beast's body, who dropped, then turned round, and limped bleeding away into the recesses of a broad thick cover; and of course Hans, shaken as he was, let him go. There were no dogs to follow him, so he was allowed to die in peace; and subsequently his spoor was taken up, and his remains found.

Probably many more people are killed by lions than one hears of, for the most frequent victims are paupers who scatter themselves about the country, squatting on the ground and crowing pignuts; they become so absorbed in their occupation that a lion could easily crouch behind and spring upon them. Numbers of people are reported to be missing in Damaraland, but no one cares to search out their fate. I made a list once of the people I had met with who had been wounded by lions, but I have lost it. It was a very long one. The wounds were always bad ones to heal. They frequently became almost well, and then broke out afresh.

September

26th.—We were now fairly *en route*, and had entered the Bushman country; we travelled along the brow of a long ridge that rose insensibly to perhaps one thousand feet above a wide plain, which stretched far away to the east, and was covered with timber trees;—this was the margin of the great desert. I was told that we should continue journeying along this ridge till we reached the furthest point that Amiral's

men had yet travelled to, and thence our course would, if we intended to go to 'Tounobis, lie across this plain.

The news of our shooting expedition had spread far and wide, and Damaras flocked like crows from all quarters to share in the food. The place where we slept on the 26th was a charming spot, among black-thorn trees, lighted up by fires in all directions, round each of which were grouped parties of our guests. We steadily rode on, keeping ahead of Amiral's party, and on the evening of the second day we arrived at the first great shooting place. It was a picturesque gorge in the ridge which led down to the plain, and in which was a succession of small springs. Rhinoceros skulls were lying in every direction, but strangely enough only one spoor could be seen. The whole of that night did Saul and I watch without seeing anything but a jackal. It was very disappointing, but the animals clearly were not there. We therefore pushed on. Saul had told us that the rhinoceroses would begin trooping in at nightfall, and that we should continue firing at them till daybreak, and I had believed him. Forty were killed here about a month since. I could not doubt it, for I counted in a small space upwards of twenty heads; but I suppose that a vast number were also wounded, and that the whole game was fairly scared from the place. Amiral's men were hard up for food; each man came on his ride-ox, and carried nothing with him.

On the 28th we arrived at the furthest place the Namaquas had explored to. We saw about a dozen fresh spoors of elephants, and a few of rhinoceroses. I tried all I could to make the people encamp out of ear-shot of the water but they would not. No elephants came that night, but a rhinoceros, a lion, a hyena, and a gnu were "bagged." The Damaras were only allowed the carrion, as Amiral's suite of forty men all had to be fed: these poor people were in a sad state; they searched for pieces of old rhinoceros hide, the skin of animals that had been slaughtered here before, and which had dried in the sun before wild beasts had had time to devour it. This cooked in the fire and beaten with stones to make it soft enough to chew is not at all bad, and I have often eaten it; but there was not enough of it to feed the whole crew of Damaras, neither were there pignuts here for them to crow, and they were, consequently, in great distress.

Several Bushmen came to us here, of the tribe that lived at 'Tounobis; the Namaquas can hardly understand them; they laughed excessively at the odd double way in which they pronounce their clicks. One man,

the son of the chief whose name means "Buffalo," was much the most intelligible, and I engaged him at once as guide. He told us all about the Kubabees Hottentots, how they came and where they went, whom they killed, and whom they robbed, and gave us every particular. All the Bushmen were well acquainted with the great waters to the north-east (the Lake 'Ngami and its rivers) and described the boats on them, and mimicked the alligators and the hippopotami. They had heard also of the Soun Damup, that tribe of Ghou Damup that live in an independent state along the lower part of the Omoramba, and pointed out the direction of their country. They knew of waggons having gone to Lake 'Ngami, and said that they had some things which were given to them by the people who travelled in them, whom they particularly described. They, however, protested that the country was, in this peculiarly dry season, impassable beyond 'Tounobis.

How far this place was we could not well make out, but it certainly was a long journey without water; tired and footsore as the oxen were, I was determined however to attempt it. The Bushmen declared that the game was all scared away from where we were; but that we should see immense quantities at 'Tounobis. One informant asserted that the buffaloes were so thick upon the ground that we should have great difficulty in driving the waggons through them. But they all agreed that near 'Tounobis it would be dangerous to travel at night, as the wild animals would certainly charge us and our oxen when we met them on the way.

We started for 'Tounobis on the afternoon of October 1st with Amiral and half of his men; after about three hours we came to a little well that the Hottentots who were before us had just drunk dry, and, going on, to our delight saw two huge white rhinoceroses, three or four hundred yards on one side of us. They are indeed immense creatures, so far longer than the black ones, and their horns so much larger. The rhinoceros now in the Regent's Park Gardens is a black rhinoceros; it is much the most vicious of the two kinds, but nothing like the size of the other. We all tumbled off our oxen, some twenty of us (the others had returned to Amiral's waggons), and ran helter-skelter through the bushes each his own way, till we were pretty near them, and then, as one trotted up to see what was the matter, a volley was blazed into him, that bowled him over like a hare. The other one took a sweep and escaped unshot. The rapidity with which the slaughtered one was cut up was perfectly astonishing. I minuted the whole occurrence;

it only took twenty minutes, and we were in our saddles again thirty-five minutes after we had left them. It must be recollected that three-penny pocket-knives are not the best of instruments to make an impression on rhinoceros hide. There is no knife so good as a common butcher's knife; as a general rule, soft steel, or even iron, is far better than hard steel, because you can sharpen the first on any bit of stone, and the metal does not splinter when it comes against a bone.

We followed an elephant path, which went as straight as a Roman road. I took its direction several times with an azimuth compass, and it did not vary four degrees. We travelled till past nine, having been on the move for six and a quarter hours.

The next day, starting very early, poor Timmerman and Frieschland both knocked up; they had never recovered the Ondonga journey; we drove them as far as we could, but it was no use, and as we of course could not wait in the middle of the plain without water, we had to leave the poor creatures to their fate.

This day we managed eleven hours' actual travelling, and could have easily pushed on again, at midnight, but the Bushmen begged us not, as we were coming to where the rhinoceroses were very numerous, and assured us that if we started in the morning we should arrive at 'Tounobis before the heat of the day. This we did; we passed along a labyrinth of wild beasts' paths, put up one rhinoceros, and, after four hours, a valley in front where smoke rose among the trees announced that we had arrived at 'Tounobis.

We hurried to the water to look for spoors, and now we were, without any doubt, in a game-country. The river-bed was trodden like the ground in a cattle fair by animals of all descriptions. The water lay in pools among rocks, and there were evident marks of where the water had stood at the preceding evening, and the depth to which it had been drunk out by the animals during the night; by the sides of these holes were the circular walls of loose stones, two or three feet high, that the Kubabees Hottentots had built up as screens, from behind which to shoot.

A little way off were crowds of Bushmen; we went to them, and found them clustered round one of a series of deep uncovered wells, about twelve feet across, and eight or ten deep, and very close together, into which an elephant had been pushed the preceding night by his comrades, as they had scrambled in droves to drink, and there he lay

just killed, and great pieces of flesh were being cut off and hauled up from his carcase.

All this was delightful, and we off-packed our lean oxen in the highest spirits about a quarter of a mile from the water, in the midst of a thick grove of trees. Amiral encamped near us; we made a kraal and settled down for at least a week's pleasuring. As soon as the elephant was disposed of, I collected all the chief Bushmen in a ring, and gave them tobacco and so forth, and began asking them about the country further on ahead. One of my men came to say that he had just found a Bushman cooking with a large iron pot; this was a sure sign of the neighbourhood of civilised man. The Bushman said that it was given to them by people from a waggon some distance to the east, and who had gone to the lake during the previous rainy season. The man who had guided the Kubabees Hottentots lived here—Toes-u-wap was his melodious name. He and the other Bushmen wore great numbers of elephant hair necklaces, with three or four beads strung on each of them; they are, as I now find, worked after the manner that the English ladies call "tattooing." Old Buffalo's son and Toes-u-wap were the only two who could understand much of the language of the Hottentots; they interpreted for us to the other Bushmen as well as they could, but our conversation was far from fluent. Several of these Bushmen knew the Mationa language, and as I had a little MS. Sichuana dictionary with me, I asked the Sichuana names for sixty words; of these about twenty were identical with those in my dictionary, twenty were somewhat like them, and the other twenty I could not find. I presume, therefore, that their language is Sichuana, or a dialect of it. The Bushmen were unanimous in saying that our next stage to the east was longer than the one we had just travelled. The season was so excessively dry that all the wells were exhausted. The Kubabees Hottentots had passed by this place in the dry season, but it was subsequent to an ordinarily rainy summer, and they left 'Tounobis in the afternoon, travelled all night, and next midday drank water with reeds, after their manner, from a place where the sand was damp; on the ensuing day they came to a Bushman werft, and so on every day till the fifth, when they reached a Mationa cattle post; they call it Eisis in Hottentot, Chuèsa in Mationa language; from there the hills that border the great water (river or lake I am not sure which) can be seen. There is said to be much game there.

We had great difficulty in making the Bushmen distinguish between

the lake and the rivers; they called the whole water-country by one name—Tl' Annee. However, I will not enter at length into these details, as more accurate information will certainly be received before long from the whites, or whiter races, who are now steadily pushing northwards.

We repaired the circular walls of loose stones that were to form our shooting-screens. The lower they are the better, generally speaking, as being less likely to attract attention; but when it can be managed, a wall about two feet nine inches high is much the most convenient to shoot over, as a man's position is not cramped when he kneels down and fires from behind one of these: they ought to be six or seven feet across. A hole in the ground is sometimes made instead of a wall; but generally speaking, the neighbourhood of large watering-places in these parts is a mass of limestone rock, into which one cannot dig.

It is one of the most strangely exciting positions that a sportsman can find himself in, to lie behind one of these screens or holes by the side of a path leading to a watering-place so thronged with game as Tounobis. Herds of gnus glide along the neighbouring paths in almost endless files: here standing out in bold relief against the sky, there a moving line just visible in the deep shades; and all as noiseless as a dream. Now and then a slight pattering over the stones makes you start; it jars painfully on the strained ear, and a troop of zebras pass frolicking by. All at once you observe twenty or thirty yards off two huge ears pricked up high above the brushwood; another few seconds, and a sharp solid horn indicates the cautious and noiseless approach of the great rhinoceros. Then the rifle or gun is poked slowly over the wall, which has before been covered with a plaid, or something soft, to muffle all grating sounds; and you keep a sharp and anxious look-out through some cranny in your screen. The beast moves nearer and nearer; you crouch close up under the wall, lest he should see over it and perceive you. Nearer, nearer still; yet somehow his shape is indistinct, and perhaps his position unfavourable to warrant a shot. Another moment, and he is within ten yards, and walking steadily on. There lies a stone, on which you had laid your caross and other things, when making ready to enter your shooting-screen; the beast has come to it, he sniffs the taint of them, tosses his head up wind, and turns his huge bulk full broad-side on to you. Not a second is to be lost. Bang! and the bullet lies well home under his shoulder. Then follows a plunge and a rush, and the animal charges madly about,



making wide sweeps to right and left with his huge horn, as you crouch down still and almost breathless, and with every nerve on the stretch.

He is off; you hear his deep blowing in the calm night; now his gallop ceases. The occasional rattling of a stone alone indicates that he is yet a-foot; for a moment all is still, and then a scarcely audible "sough" informs you that the great beast has sunk to the ground, and that his pains of death are over.

The animals are picked up in the morning; but it is not very easy to find them. Spooring is, in most cases, quite out of the question, on account of the numberless tracks. The Bushmen jerked every particle of the meat of all the animals that we killed, excepting that which we used ourselves. I like rhinoceros flesh more than that of any other wild animal. A young calf, rolled up in a piece of spare hide, and baked in the earth is excellent. I hardly know which part of the little animal is the best, the skin or the flesh.

The Hottentots shot away a great many bullets at rhinoceroses, and did, I daresay, a great deal of mischief; for they lie six or seven together in each shooting-screen, and blaze volleys at long distances—often thirty or forty yards—at the rhinoceros. The consequence is that they "bag" but very few, compared to the number that they fire at; the others most likely linger on for a few days, and then lie down and die elsewhere. One night Andersson and myself were lying out together when a rhinoceros came, that I fired at. Something smaller was following at its heels; but we could not see what, on account of the shade of the dark bushes. It was a brilliant moonlight; and we were foolish enough to leave our screen, and poke about after the animal, which luckily we never found. In the early morning Andersson went to look for the game that had been shot; and first followed the spoor of the rhinoceros we had been seeking. He soon found the animal lying dead among the bushes; and he walked carelessly up, with rifle over his shoulder, when as he was just upon the animal, a full-grown calf rushed out from behind its dead mother right at him. He had a very narrow escape, for the creature brushed by him in the narrow pathway; he was about as large as an ox, and his spoor was half size. Had we come upon them the preceding night, we should have run some risk. On one occasion a rhinoceros that he fired at, brushed down the stones of one side of his shooting place.

If I were to travel again on a shooting tour I should certainly take a large opera-glass with me. It is one of the most perfect of night-

glasses, besides being the most useful of telescopes. I should think it would put a man's sight in the dusk on a par with that of wild beasts generally; and it is so portable and manageable an instrument, that I should never lie out watching for animals without one. Since my return to England I have often amused myself at night in trying their powers, which certainly are marvellous. At sea they are coming into general use, and more than one naval officer of considerable experience in chasing slavers, has assured me of their great superiority over the ordinary cumbrous night telescope. Talking of these things, I may add, that a powerfully magnifying telescope is of very little use in tropical Africa; the air is always seething and waving from the heat, so that images are seldom sufficiently distinct to be worth magnifying.

I generally used the "direct" telescope of my sextant for day purposes; it is in fact a small single opera-glass, and I liked it very much.

Elephant shooting was out of the question at 'Tounobis for men in our position, without horses and without dogs. The river-bed is perfectly bare and very light in colour from the quantity of slabs of limestone. I should be extremely sorry to be chased by any animal over it. The Hottentots made such a noise that the elephants only came down twice whilst I was there; the first time we ran up to them and fired among their legs, there were fourteen in the herd, fine fellows, standing in a row fronting us in the open moonshine. None of us dared go nearer than sixty yards; we there had the shelter of a low slab in the limestone, but beyond the ground was quite flat.

I should think the legs were the best part to fire at, in these cases, because if the bullet strikes the bone it is sure to break it, and an elephant on three legs is like a waggon on three wheels, quite brought to a standstill; and, again, if the bone be missed, the wound, if any, is only a flesh wound, and does not kill the animal. Our shots produced no effect except some very angry trumpeting from the elephants, who first faced us and then decamped. The second time we let them alone, and a young bull fell into one of the wells, which we shot. I think I would have given anything for horses at 'Tounobis. I should have enjoyed myself amazingly if I had had them.

> There were no lions whatever there; they and rhinoceroses do not hit it off together, and are seldom found in numbers at the same place. A rhinoceros is a sulky morose brute, and it is very ridiculous to watch a sedate herd of gnus bullied by one of them. He runs among them

and pokes about with his horn, while they scamper and scurry away from him in great alarm. He surely must often kill them.

For my own taste, I should like to spend nights perched up in some tree with a powerful night glass watching these night frolics and attacks. I really do not much care about shooting the animals, though it makes a consummation to the night work, as the death of the fox does to a fox hunt, but it is the least pleasurable part of the whole. Great fun seems to go on among the different animals; jackals are always seen and are always amusing; their impudence is intolerable; they know that you do not want to shoot them, and will often sit in front of your screen and stare you in the face. Sometimes whilst straining your eyes at the dimly seen bushes about you, the branched stem of one gradually forms itself into the graceful head of some small antelope. The change is like that of a dissolving view, the object had been under your notice for a minute, yet you could not tell when it ceased to be a bush and became an animal. The young rhinoceroses must be much chased by the hyenas and wild dogs, for you never find one, either young or old, whose ears do not show marks of having been sadly bitten.

I do not think an elephant gives anything like the idea of bulk and power that the white rhinoceros does. An elephant is so short and so high upon his legs, that he looks what jockeys would call "weedy," in comparison to the low and solid rhinoceros. The largest of these that we shot was eighteen feet long and six high; the head and neck forming, I should say, a third of the entire length. If a creature of this size be imagined against the wall of a room, an idea may be formed of his immense size. Their rush is wonderfully quick; they seem to me to get up their speed much quicker than a horse or any other animal I know. I really think that if a rhinoceros and horse caught sight of one another at the same instant, when not more than ten yards apart, the beast would catch the steed. Their movements are amazingly rapid when they receive a bullet.

*Oct. 7th.*—I had a most picturesque finale to a rhinoceros hunt. The Bushmen came to tell me that a black rhinoceros was lying wounded under some trees, about an hour off, and very savage, so I went to him, and put him up with a bullet as he lay twenty-five yards from me. After the scrimmage which ensued, I ran after him, he going a lame trot, and I, as hard as I could pelt, putting three or four bullets into him at long distances, and loading as I ran. At length we came to the edge

of an open flat that was about two hundred yards across. At the further side of that was a mound, on the top of which stood a fine overshadowing tree, and in the middle of the flat was a scraggy, rotten stump, and two or three dead branches. The rhinoceros went across this, climbed the mound, and stood at bay under the tree. I did not much like crossing the open flat, but I thought I could certainly run two yards to his three, which would take me back in safety among the bushes, so I went my best pace to the middle of the flat keeping the dead branches between me and him, they were a mere nothing, but a rhinoceros' sight is never keen, and his eyes were, I dare say, dim from his wounds. As soon as I came to the tree, I dropped down on my knee, steadied my shaking hand against one bough, for I had run very far and was exhausted, and, resting the muzzle of my heavy rifle in the fork of another took a quick shot and gave the beast a smart sharp sounding blow with a well-placed bullet. He did not start nor flinch, but slowly raised his head, and then dropping it down, poured volumes of crimson blood from his mouth. He did this again and again; at length he staggered a very little, then he put his fore legs out and apart from each other, and so stood for some seconds, when he slowly sunk to the ground upon his broad chest and died. I sketched the scene from memory when I returned, regretting that I had not had a pencil with me at the time to do it more justice, for the dying beast with the branched tree above him was quite a study for an artist. Having shot animals till we were tired, a pleasant moonlight evening was spent on much smaller game—the spring hare as the Dutch call it. It is a creature about two feet long, shaped like a kangaroo in body and tail, but with a different head; it burrows and lives in holes all day, but at night frisks about and grazes.

We and the Bushmen arranged ourselves in large circles, enclosing fresh patches of ground each time, and then beat up towards the centre. We generally enclosed two or three of these funny creatures, who hopped about in the oddest way, and we rushed in and assassinated them with sticks. The sinews of their powerful tails form excellent materials for sewing carosses.

I worked hard to fix the longitude of 'Tounobis, which I did more successfully than I could have hoped, as my instrument was a small and not very legible one, and for want of oil, I had to read off the observations by firelight. The Bushmen assured me that the character of the country between that place and the lake was of exactly the same

description as that around us, a sandy soil with not unfrequent dried-up vleys, and covered with trees, but by no means so thickly as to impede the progress of a waggon.

In fact if a person wanted to go from Walfisch Bay to the lake, he would have an excellent waggon road after he had left Eikhams (Jonker's place) one day behind him. He should follow the Quieep River as far as it goes eastwards, and then make a straight course for Kurri-koop, taking the chance of vley water by the road; from Kurri-koop, through Elephant's Fountain to 'Twas, all is excellent; thence he should follow the foot of the ridge and not the top of it, as we had done, sending the oxen to water up the gorges. In the twenty-one hours' journey to 'Tounobis, three or four large vleys were passed, in which water would lie for many months. From there onwards I should have no fear whatever in the rainy season, even if the Bushmen refused to guide me, because the character of the country is adapted for holding water; but from Damaraland to the Ovampo no person could think of travelling without guides, unless there was a recent track to follow. If he once strayed from the path he would be hopelessly involved in the thorn thicket.

I fancy that the Bushmen spoke truth about the want of water ahead, as the droves of animals which had congregated in the neighbourhood of 'Tounobis continued drinking every night, the repeated firing being insufficient to drive them away; it seemed as though they had no other neighbouring watering-place to go to.

As the Bushmen learnt to understand our Hottentot a little better, we had some long talks about the animals on the river that joins the western end of the lake; that there are many there quite new to the Hottentots is beyond doubt, as several carosses were stolen by the Kubabees and brought back south, and the skins that many of these were made from were quite unknown to them. The Bushmen, without any leading question or previous talk upon the subject, mentioned the unicorn. I cross-questioned them thoroughly, but they persisted in describing a one-horned animal, something like a gemsbok in shape and size, whose horn was in the middle of its forehead. The spoor of the animal was, they said, like that of a zebra. The horn was in shape like a gemsbok's, but shorter. They spoke of the animal as though they knew of it, but were not at all familiar with it. It will indeed be strange if, after all, the creature has a real existence. There are recent travellers in the north of tropical Africa who have heard of it there, and

believe in it, and there is surely plenty of room to find something new in the vast belt of *terra incognita* that lies in this continent.

Of another fabulous monster, the cockatrice, a most widely spread belief exists. The Ovampo, the Bushmen of this place, and Timboo, all protested that there is such a creature, and that they had often seen it. They described it as a snake, sometimes twelve feet long, and as thick as the arm; slender for its length, with a brilliantly variegated skin; it has a comb on the head exactly like a guinea-fowl, but red, and has also wattles; its cry is very like the noise that fowls make when roosting—I do not mean crowing, but a subdued chucking; its bite is highly venomous, and it is a tree snake. I heard an instance of ten cows having been bitten one after the other; they said that sometimes people when on their way home at night hear a chucking in the tree, and think that their fowls have strayed, and as they are peering about under the branches to see where they are, the snake darts down upon them and bites them. It appears to be a particularly vicious snake. I have generally heard it called "hangara." I never heard of its possessing wings.

Since my return I have had my attention directed to a recent book, Mr. Gosse's "Notes of a Naturalist in Jamaica," in which he mentions the prevalence of the same belief there, and relates several reported facts relative to the creature. In the Penny Cyclopædia, under the head cockatrice, many old drawings of these snakes are reproduced, and are worth looking at; they differ much in character from one another, and seem to have been derived from different originals. I can give no clue to the fable of the cockatrice's eggs.

The Bushmen of 'Tounobis are far superior to the Damaras in the art of catching animals; their springe is a very simple one. I admired the simplicity of the method by which the antelopes were induced to leap into the middle of it; an unpractised hand would have made a fence as though he were laying out a steeple-chase course, but the Bushmen simply bend a twig across the pathway, which does not in the least frighten the animal, but which, in the gaiety of his heart, he overleaps. The pitfalls are neatly made; there is, however, nothing in them which an English gamekeeper would not contrive as well.

I must take this opportunity of explaining to the uninitiated how to set a common gun (as a spring gun), to shoot game in the night. The use of such a contrivance is obvious. Hyenas, perhaps, vex and trouble you night after night, and it is a horrid bore to sit up through

ated on was as follows. A sheep gives twenty meals, no bread or other vegetables being afforded, and a man cannot work well with less than two meals a day. A sheep therefore feeds ten people for one day. An average ox is equivalent to seven sheep, and it therefore feeds seventy people for one day, or thirty-five for two, or twenty-four for three. I cannot accurately say what the quantity of food in that different kinds of game afford, as waste always goes to when one is slaughtered, but, as a rough allowance, I considered—

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 1 Springbok or reedbuck . . . . .      | 1 equal to 1 sheep. |
| 1 Hartbeest . . . . .                  | 2 "                 |
| 1 Zebra, or gnu, or gonabok . . . . .  | 4 "                 |
| 1 Gnu . . . . .                        | 2 "                 |
| 1 Black or Kistka rhinoceros . . . . . | 3 "                 |
| 1 White . . . . .                      | 4 "                 |

I possessed seventy-five oxen and one calf, of these fifty-seven had been spanned, including the side- and pack-oxen. My side-oxen were Frischland, Ceylon, Thermanman, Buchan, and Fairland. Anderson had Spain. All these would also carry packs as a matter of course, but there were others simply pack-oxen. Hans had three side-oxen, six cows, and five calves; John Ma-a had two side-oxen. There were also two heifers that belonged to some of the other men. Gross total of oxen, and cows and calves ninety-four; but my own flock of sheep was reduced to twenty-four. I had therefore following twenty slaughter oxen; full provisions for two and a half months for all my party, independently of game. This was not nearly as much as I should have liked, but I trusted to buy more on my journey, and also to get some shooting.

*March 24th.*—This was our most difficult day; the Swakop ran through a gorge so broken and narrow, as not to admit a waggon, and the only road we could find out of it by for some considerable distance along a narrow ridge of jagged rock with a precipitous fall on our left. Hake's thorns and turnaes made the country quite impenetrable everywhere else, our road was horrible; the waggon crashed and thundered and thumped, but somehow or other got safe over. If I had to undergo two or three more such days of journeying, the waggons would have to be left behind. The oxen were dreadfully wild, there was no guiding or restraining them down hill, but they tossed themselves about and charged like wild buffaloes; it still took us an hour and a

half to inspire the two waggons, and every man was actively employed. We went only three hours, and slept at the furthest watering-place that Hans and I had explored. Now we had to trust to the guides, whose ideas of time and distance were most provokingly indistinct; besides this they have no comparative in their language, so that you cannot say to them, "Which is the longer of the two, the next stage or the last one?" but you must say, "The last stage is little; the next, is it great?" The reply is not, it is a "little longer," "much longer," or "very much longer;" but simply, "it is so," or "it is not so." They have a very poor notion of time. If you say, "Suppose we start at sunrise, where will the sun be when we arrive?" they make the wildest points in the sky, though they are something of astronomers, and give names to several stars. They have no way of distinguishing days, but reckon by the rainy season, the dry season, or the pig-nut season. When inquiries are made about how many days' journey off a place may be, their ignorance of all numerical ideas is very annoying. In practice, whatever they may possess in their language, they certainly use no numeral greater than three. When they wish to express four, they take to their fingers, which are to them as formidable instruments of calculation as a sliding-rule is to an English schoolboy. They puzzle very much after five, because no spare hand remains to grasp and secure the fingers that are required for "units." Yet they seldom lose oxen; the way in which they discover the loss of one, is not by the number of the herd being diminished, but by the absence of a face they know. When battering is going on, each sheep must be paid for separately. Thus: suppose two sticks of tobacco to be the rate of exchange for one sheep, it would sorely puzzle a Damara to take two sheep and give him four sticks. I have done so, and seen a man first put two of the sticks apart and take a sight over them at one of the sheep he was about to sell. Having satisfied himself that that one was honestly paid for, and finding to his surprise that exactly two sticks remained in hand to settle the account for the other sheep, he would be afflicted with doubt; the transaction seemed to come out too "fat" to be correct, and he would refer back to the first couple of sticks, and then his mind got hazy and confused, and wandered from one sheep to the other, and he broke off the transaction until two sticks were put into his hand and one sheep driven away, and then the other two sticks given him and the second sheep driven away. When a Damara's mind is bent upon number, it is too much occupied to dwell upon quantity;