

come from a great distance, and who often find their account in amusing their rulers with pleasing tales; which, the more wonderful they are, with the greater avidity they are swallowed. Another source of these false reports is in the depraved disposition of mankind who are prone to impose as much as they can on the credulity of the weak and simple. Admitting it to be true, that the Romans introduced into their public spectacles a great number of lions, which, indeed, they might easily collect from the extensive tracts of country they possessed in Africa and Asia, yet it never can be consonant either with truth or probability, that armies of lions should be found in these quarters of the globe, where only, according to the very probable position, of M. de Buffon they exist. So that when a later writer, the Abbé de Manet, in his description of the northern parts of Africa, affirms, that the same kind of lion is likewise found in America, we may safely consider this merely at a hasty assertion, which is not warranted either by the authority of others or his own experience: indeed, this author's testimony is much to be credited when he informs us, that the negroes in the northern parts of Africa, are used to catch lions in pits, but do not dare to eat any of the flesh, for fear lest the other lions should be revenged on them. In this particular, however I have not found the Hottentots, or inhabitants of the southern parts of Africa, equally superstitious, as they told me, that they eat the flesh of lions, and looked upon it to be both good and wholesome. They likewise informed me, that the lions as well as the hyænas, had been formerly much bolder than they are at present, as they used to seize them at night, and carry them off from their cottages: at the same time they assured me, that a lion that had once tasted human flesh would never after, if he could help it, prey upon any other. They added, that for the same reason, they were obliged to fix benches up in trees to sleep on; so that they could not so readily be caught unawares by the lions, and might likewise the easier defend themselves when they were attacked by them.

So that, in fact, they were obliged to acknowledge, that with the assistance of the Christians and their fire-arms, they are much less exposed to the ravages of this fierce animal; while, on the other hand, I could not but agree with them, that the colonists themselves were a much greater scourge to them than all the wild beasts of their country put together; as the Hottentot nations, since the arrival of the colonists in this part of the world, have

found themselves reduced to a much narrower space in their possessions, and their numbers very much decreased.

In these times, at least, the lion does not willingly attack any animal openly, unless provoked, or extremely hungry; in which latter case he is said to fear no danger, and to be repelled by no resistance. The method in which the lion takes his prey, is almost always to spring or throw himself on it, with one vast leap from the place of his concealment; yet if he chances to miss his leap, he will not, as the Hottentots unanimously assured me, follow his prey any further; but, as though he were ashamed, turning round towards the place where he lay in ambush, slowly, and step by step, as it were, measures the exact length between the two points, in order to find how much too short of, or beyond the mark he had taken his leap. One of these animals, however, was once known to pursue the elk antelope with the greatest eagerness and ardour, without any one getting to see the end of the chase. It is singular, that the foxes in Europe, according to M. Collon's *Hist. Nouv. de l'Univers*, tom. iv. p. 202 when they have leaped short of their mark, and their prey has got away from them, measure the length of their leap, in the same manner as the lion does.

It is particularly near rivers and springs, that the lion finds it best answers his purpose, to lie in wait. Any animal whatever that is obliged to go thither in order to quench his thirst, is in danger, *tanquam canis ad Nilum*, of becoming a victim to the irresistible power of this blood-thirsty tyrant.

It should seem, that in case gazels, and other such animals, had scent of the lion when he was near them, as strong as it appeared to be in my horses and oxen, they might easily avoid the danger. I do not know how the fact really stands; but it is possible that the lion, like the sportsmen of this country, may know so well how to chuse the place of its concealment, that the wind may drive its effluvia from the side whence it might be perceived by its prey.

Following the example of other travellers in such tracts of this part of Africa as are infested by lions, we always took the precaution to make loud cracks with our large ox-whip, whenever we were going to pass a river. These cracks of a whip, which, in fact, make a louder noise, and a greater vibration in the air than the discharge from a pistol, nay, are heard much farther than the report of a gun, is looked upon as a very efficacious method of scaring away wild beasts. These large whips