

at the same time hurt some of them. They had concerted matters so, that some of them should rather attempt to pierce him through with their hassagais or spears, while at the same instant the others should endeavour to cling about its legs.

They looked upon it as a certain fact, and I have since heard the same from others, that a lion does not immediately kill the person he has got under him, unless he is excited to do so by the resistance he meets with. At length, however, it is reported, the royal tyrant gives the coup de grace on the victim's breast with a hideous roar. On this occasion I must do my Hottentots the justice to say, that they did not shew the least fear; though they conceived the old and commonly received notion to be absolutely true, that both lions and tigers would attack a slave or a Hottentot before they will a colonist or a white man. Consequently Mr. Immelman and I had no such great reason to be in fear for our own persons, unless more than one lion should come to attack us, or that we should discharge our pieces too precipitately and miss him; for in such a case, the lion always rushes on the marksman. In another respect, however, we that lay in the waggon and at a distance from the fire, were most liable to receive a visit from the lions; or at least to see our horses and oxen, which were tied up to the waggon, seized by them. Otherwise, for the singularity of the spectacle, I should have been glad to have seen an attack of this kind, if it had not cost me more than a couple of my oxen. In such a case, indeed, my horses would probably first have fallen a prey to this rapacious animal, as it is generally supposed that the lion gives them the preference.

Among our oxen there was one which at this time, as well as since upon other similar occasions, appeared extremely disquieted and restless. It had, besides, a singular and astonishing habit of making an inward noise, which cannot be described; and this was the case likewise with the stone-horse, in his own peculiar way. This, in fact, was sufficient to make us keep ourselves in readiness, though it happened not to be absolutely necessary; however, we quickly got accustomed to it, and several times laid ourselves down to sleep, void of care, leaving our beasts to sigh unheeded. It is, indeed, a wonderful circumstance, that the brute creation should have been taught merely by nature to be in dread of the lion; for our horses and oxen were all from places, where I am certain they could have no knowledge of this dreadful adversary of theirs: so that in this we must admire the bounty of

Providence, which, while it has sent such a tyrant as the lion among the animal creation, has likewise taught them to discern and distinguish it with trembling and horror.

One would suppose, that the roaring of the lion would prove serviceable to the other animals, as being a warning for them to betake themselves to flight; but as when he roars, according to all report, he puts his mouth to the ground, so that the sound is diffused equally all over the place, without, as we have already mentioned, its being possible to hear from what quarter it comes, the animals are intimidated and scared to such a degree, as to fly about backwards and forwards in the dark to every side; in consequence of which, some of them may easily chance to run on to the very spot from whence the tremendous sound actually proceeds, and which they meant most to avoid.

A writer, in other respects extremely rational, who styles himself *Officier du Roi*, asserts, in his *Voyage à l'Île de France*, &c. p. 63, that in Africa there are found whole armies of lions; a fact of which, he says, he was informed, by three persons of consequence in the government, whose names he mentions.

This author, as well as his informers, and those, if such there be, who may have given any credit to him, may be easily made to conceive the palpable absurdity of the idea by this single consideration, that to support armies of lions, it would require a greater quantity of quadrupeds and game, as it is called, than is to be found not only in Africa, but in all the world besides. In order to confirm this assertion, we may appeal to a witty observation made by the Indians, and reported by *Lastau*. 'It is a very fortunate circumstance, said they, that the Portuguese are as few in number as they are cruel in their dispositions; just as it is with the tigers and lions with respect to the rest of the animal creation, or otherwise there would soon be an end of us men.'

With regard to the testimonies of the persons of consequence here, appealed to, I must beg leave to observe, that we may at any time, without the least hesitation, call in question any position which militates against common sense. Besides, in the East-Indies, knowledge and the appearance of truth are not always inseparable from authority. I myself have heard a man belonging to the council at the Cape, relate to strangers the most ridiculous absurdities concerning the country in which he lived. Stories of this kind often originate from the farmers and yeomen, who