

allusions in almost every page either to the desert character of the country, or to the numbers of large animals inhabiting it. The same thing is rendered evident by the many engravings which have been published of various parts of the interior. When the "Beagle" was at Cape Town, I made an excursion of some days' length into the country, which at least was sufficient to render that which I had read more fully intelligible.

Dr. Andrew Smith, who, at the head of his adventurous party, has lately succeeded in passing the Tropic of Capricorn, informs me that, taking into consideration the whole of the southern part of Africa, there can be no doubt of its being a sterile country. On the southern and southeastern coasts there are some fine forests, but, with these exceptions, the traveller may pass for days together through open plains, covered by a poor and scanty vegetation. It is difficult to convey any accurate idea of degrees of comparative fertility; but it may be safely said that the amount of vegetation supported at any one time¹ by Great Britain exceeds, perhaps even tenfold, the quantity on an equal area in the interior parts of southern Africa. The fact that bullock-wagons can travel in any direction, excepting near the coast, without more than occasionally half an hour's delay in cutting down bushes, gives, perhaps, a more definite notion of the scantiness of the vegetation. Now, if we look to the animals inhabiting these wide plains, we shall find their numbers extraordinarily great, and their bulk immense. We must enumerate the elephant, three species of rhinoceros, and probably, according to Dr. Smith, two others, the hippopotamus, the giraffe, the bos caffer (as large as a full-grown bull) and the elan (but little less), two zebras, and the quaccha, two gnus, and several antelopes even larger than these latter animals. It may be supposed that, although the species are numerous, the individuals of each kind are few. By the kindness of Dr. Smith, I am enabled to show that

¹ I mean by this to exclude the total amount which may have been successively produced and consumed during a given period.