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A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa

James Backhouse (1794–1869) came from a family of accomplished naturalists and horticulturalists. As a Quaker, he spent several years in Australia engaged in missionary and humanitarian work, after which he returned to England via Mauritius and South Africa. The present work, first published in 1844, is adapted from his journals of that journey, providing a rich and personal account. It contains vivid descriptions of the people he encountered, particularly the indigenous communities and those involved in the slave trade, which he found revolting and unchristian. Backhouse's horticultural interests are evident in the detailed botanical observations he made, the value of which led to a genus of shrub being named after him: *Backhousia*. This work contains illustrations based on original sketches made by Backhouse during the trip, and appendices which include letters and texts relating to the mission, as well as a map of South Africa.



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A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa

James Backhouse





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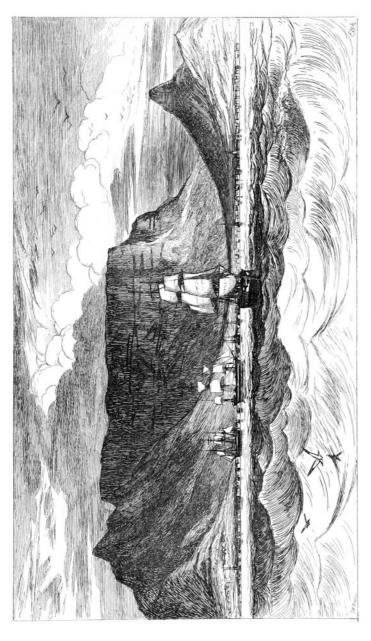
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Cape Town of Africa.



ANARRATIVE

OF

A VISIT

TO

THE MAURITIUS

AND

SOUTH AFRICA,

BY

JAMES BACKHOUSE.

ILLUSTRATED BY TWO MAPS, SIXTEEN ETCHINGS,
AND TWENTY-EIGHT WOOD-CUTS.

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^{*} Strelitzia regina and augusta, Podocarpus elongatus, Yellow Wood, Euphorbia grandidens? The Chandalier Euphorbia, Euphorbia ——, E. meloformis, Aloe reclinata, A. serrata, Opuntia ——, Zamia ——. Protea ——.

⁺ Aloe ferox, Testudinaria eliphantipes, Hottentots Bread, Acacia Giraffe, Kameeldoorn with the nests of the Social Phileterus, and Pensile Grosbeak, Aloe arborescens, the Kokerboom, Phænix reclinata, Euphorbia hexagona, Morsedoorn, E. meloformis.



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121 line 16th from foot, for "Gaauwrit" read Gaauwrits.

346 head, for "Gunariep" read Nu Gariep.

383 for Chapter "XXIV," read XXIV. B.

560 head of chapter 32, for "Conversion of D. Afrikaner," read Conversion of T. Afrikaner.

APPENDIX.

iii. line 5th from top, for "long. 15° 56'" read 50° 56'. xiii. line 11th from foot, for "light of light" read light of life.



INTRODUCTION.

The visit to the Mauritius and South Africa, a Narrative of which is contained in the following pages, succeeded to one to the Australian Colonies, of which a narrative has already been given in a separate volume. In the Mauritius and South Africa, as well as in the Australian Colonies, the writer was accompanied by his friend, George Washington Walker, of Newcastle upon Tyne, who subsequently settled at Hobart Town, in Van Diemens Land.

The object of these visits was purely the discharge of a religious duty, to which they believed themselves to be specially called; but in passing along, their attention was alive to a variety of secondary objects, which appeared worthy of notice. From the Journal of the writer, this Narrative has been prepared.

The visit extended to all the towns within the Colonies visited, and to all the Missionary Stations existing in South Africa, at the period of the visit. In the progress of the journey, the writer was induced to attempt making rough sketches of many of the places visited, by finding a difficulty in describing them satisfactorily in words. This circumstance occasioned the pictorial illustrations in the early part of the volume, now presented to the notice of the reader, to be much fewer than in the middle and the latter part. The sketches of Cape Town and of the Missionary Station of Zuurbraak, were furnished by other pencils.

The circumstances under which the writer travelled, did not admit of his making particular descriptions of the numerous animals which came under his notice. For these, he is chiefly indebted to the works of Dr. Andrew Smith, the Author of a splendid work, entitled,—" Illustrations of the



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INTRODUCTION.

Zoology of South Africa;" of Captain Harris, the Author of the "Wild Sports of South Africa;" and of Andrew Steedman, the Author of "Wanderings in South Africa." The descriptions in this volume do not, however, pretend to much scientific nicety; they are rather designed to give, in few words, general ideas of the objects described.

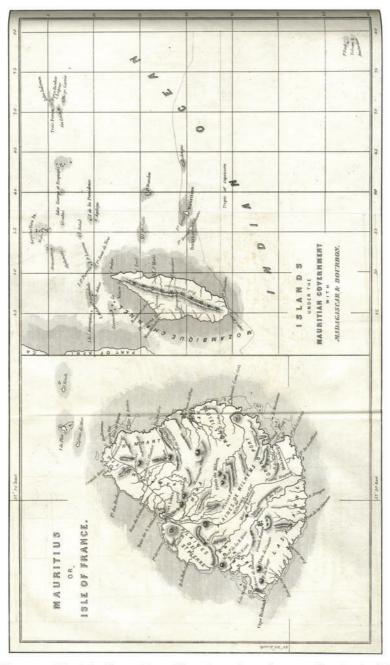
In speaking of the Native Tribes, names have been used, according rather to the idiom of the English language, than to that of the languages of Africa: thus a man of the Bechuana nation is here spoken of as a Bechuana, instead of a Mochuana, while in the language of the Bechuanas, Mochuana is the singular of Bechuana, and Sechuana is the name of their language. The orthography of the names of places in South Africa, is not well settled; a discrepancy will sometimes be observed between the spelling on the map at the end of the volume, or on the etchings, and in the text of the book; the orthography in the text is regarded by the writer as the most correct, but some of the names in the map and etchings were engraved while the work was in progress, and not subjected to his revision. The heights of mountains, marked on the maps, are, at least, in some instances, taken from the plains on which they stand, and not from the level of the sea; the heights given in the text are from uncertain authority.

At page 461, the Zoolu warrior, Moselekatse, is spoken of as being supposed to have been destroyed among the natives of the interior; but a letter from Griqua Town, dated "Nov. 1st, 1843," received while this volume was in the press, states, that intelligence had just reached that station, of Moselekatse having fallen upon a tribe called Bakhatli, near Kurrechane, and having destroyed them.

The writer trusts, that the perusal of this volume will increase the feeling of christian interest for all classes of the inhabitants of the countries described; and he especially hopes, that it may promote the feeling of sympathy for the devoted individuals who are labouring amidst many privations, to spread the Redeemer's kingdom.

York, 20th of 3rd Month, 1844.





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