

Benjamin Stout

NARRATIVE  
OF THE  
LOSS OF THE SHIP *HERCULES*,

*Grand Rutger*  
*Biller*

COMMANDED BY  
CAPTAIN BENJAMIN STOUT,

ON  
*THE COAST OF CAFFRARIA,*

THE  
16th OF JUNE, 1796;

ALSO  
A CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETAIL OF HIS TRAVELS

THROUGH THE  
SOUTHERN DESERTS OF AFRICA,

AND  
THE COLONIES,  
TO  
*THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.*

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS  
TO  
THE RT. HON. JOHN ADAMS,  
PRESIDENT OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

OF  
AMERICA.

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a temporary want, they sleep away their time, until, pressed by famine, they again renew the dangers of the forest.

In these excursions, they frequently encounter the *lion*, the *rhinoceros*, the *hippopotamus*, the *buffalo*, the *hyaena*, the *panther* or the *tiger*. All are their food ; and they frequently devour them without touching the fire. The oxen, which they possess in such abundance, it might reasonably be supposed, would protect them from want ; but the natives prefer the flesh of the wild and carnivorous animals of the desert, to the most delicate and nutritious parts of the sheep or the ox. The latter are kept by them, chiefly, as beasts of burden, or for the purposes of war ; and in training them for offensive operations, they discover a most extraordinary sagacity. They not only instruct the ox to charge an enemy with all his strength, but in the confusion of the battle, to distinguish his friends, and assist them in the combat. These creatures are also instructed to protect their flocks from the ravages of such wild

merous, and so perpetually on the look out, that he was amazed at our travelling with any degree of security ; but when he considered that we came through a part of *Caffraria*, so infested with carnivorous animals, that people could never travel safely but in parties, and well armed, he declared our being then in his house appeared to him a kind of *miracle*.

I took this opportunity of giving our worthy host a proper idea of the *Tambochis*. His mind had been poisoned by some of his *depredating* neighbours, and never going on such parties himself, had entertained these prejudices without having any opportunity of knowing the contrary. He appeared much pleased at the conduct of the *Tambochis* during our abode in their country, and declared this circumstance alone would relieve him from many hours of uneasiness.

His sequestered mansion was nearly surrounded by trees, on which were hung to dry, the skins of *lions*, *tigers*, *panthers*, and other destructive animals, killed in the vicinity of his own habitation. I observed also the carcasses of

two enormous creatures, lying near the door, which had the appearance of being recently destroyed. He told me they were two *rhinoceroses* that his sons had killed but the day before on their own land. This gave rise to a narrative respecting these animals, which the good man related with great circumspection, and which appeared to me so very extraordinary, that I determined to record it for the satisfaction of the curious.

“ These creatures, said the farmer,  
 “ are more savage, and infinitely more  
 “ to be dreaded, than any other animal  
 “ of the deserts. Even the *lion*, when  
 “ he perceives a *rhinoceros*, will fly from  
 “ him on the instant. I had a proof of  
 “ this, said he, about two years ago.  
 “ As I was traversing my lands in the  
 “ morning, I perceived a *lion* enter a  
 “ thicket, about the distance of half a  
 “ mile from the place where I stood.  
 “ In a few minutes after I observed a  
 “ *second*, then a *third*, and a *fourth*  
 “ came; they seemed to follow one ano-  
 “ ther at their leisure, and, in less than  
 “ an hour, I counted *nine* that entered

“ the same wood. Never having seen  
“ so many of the same species together,  
“ I was desirous to know the event of  
“ their meeting, and I concealed myself  
“ for the purpose. After waiting for ra-  
“ ther more than an hour in my lurking  
“ place, without either seeing any of  
“ them, or hearing any noise from the  
“ quarter where they lay, I began to de-  
“ spair of having my curiosity in the  
“ least gratified. At length, I perceiv-  
“ ed a *rhinoceros* of uncommon magni-  
“ tude approach the wood. He stood  
“ motionless for about five minutes,  
“ when he arrived at a small distance  
“ from the thicket, then tossed up his  
“ nose, and at last scented the animals  
“ that lay concealed. In an instant I  
“ saw him dart into the wood, and in  
“ the space of about five minutes after-  
“ wards I observed *all* the *lions* scamper  
“ away in different directions, and ap-  
“ parently in the greatest consternation.  
“ The *rhinoceros* beat about the wood  
“ in pursuit of his enemies for a con-  
“ siderable time; but not finding any,  
“ he broke cover at last and appeared

“ on the plain. He then looked around  
 “ him, and, enraged at his disappointment,  
 “ ment, began tearing up the earth,  
 “ and discovered every sign of madness  
 “ and desperation. I remained quietly  
 “ in my retreat until the animal disap-  
 “ peared, and then returned to my  
 “ house.”

This anecdote I thought worthy of being published ; but I now return to my narrative.

We slept this night on sacks, which our host had arranged for our accommodation. During the time we were at breakfast on the succeeding morning, our benefactor entertained us with some very interesting observations respecting the country where he resided. He particularly stated the hardships, which the colonists endured from the restrictive orders and persecuting conduct of the government at the Cape. “ I have lead  
 “ ore, said he, on my own farm, so  
 “ near the surface that we can scrape it  
 “ up with our hands, and yet we dare  
 “ not touch it—If we were known to  
 “ melt and use a single pound of it, we