

REVIEWS

KALAHARI. By JENS BJERRE. Michael Joseph, 1960. 30s.

Translated from the Danish, this story of the Danish Kalahari Expedition is mainly about those strange Stone Age primitives, the Bushmen. To a great extent it is a plea for the better treatment of the oldest people yet surviving on this earth, to whom game protection is incomprehensible, for to forbid the Bushman to hunt is to forbid him to live. The tragedy of the Bushman has frequently been authoritatively recorded, and the barbarous cruelty with which the pioneers mercilessly hunted and murdered these little people is forever a blot on humanity. The rigorous enforcement of the Kalahari Gemsbok Reserve has resulted in the virtual extinction of one Bushman group: the Etosha Pan Reserve has similarly deprived another group of their ancient hunting rights. There is still room in these great wastes for man and beast; places where the little people can enjoy traditional hunting rights. The Bushmen is part of the Kalahari fauna and in the Bechuanaland Protectorate an extensive reserve is being set aside for him exclusively. The illustrations, both in colour and black-and-white, are superb.

For all who are interested in wild life, and especially for the conservationist, the accounts of the immense concentrations of wild animals at the Etosha Pan in the rainy season are most encouraging. How many people too are aware that on the South-West African coast there is a vast breeding colony of some 80,000 seals?

Africa is full of surprises, but in South-West Africa Nature's fantasies are numerous and include: the singing sands of the Kalahari; some of the world's largest sand dunes; a petrified forest; stinking mud and sulphur islands which periodically emerge from the sea; a weird subterranean lake which can be approached only by a most terrifying descent; the Hoba meteorite of some 70 tons, the largest known in the world; the mysterious "White Lady" rock painting, thousands of years old; the Fish River Canyon, 60 kilometres long and of tremendous depth; the Aughrabies Falls (in fact a few miles outside S.W. Africa), which are the largest in South Africa and the third largest in the world; and the grotesque, longest-lived, desert plant *Welwitschia*. Enough has been mentioned to whet the appetites of a variety of tastes.

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