

From Bentley's Miscellany
LAKE NGAMI.*

It is related — at least it is recorded in the archives of Cape Town — that in the early days of that now prosperous settlement, when all the larger quadrupeds indigenous to Southern Africa existed in the neighbourhood of Table Mountain, some laborers employed in a field discovered a huge rhinoceros immovably fixed in the quicksands of the Salt River, which is within a mile of the town. The alarm being given, a number of country people armed with such weapons as were at hand, rushed to the spot with an intention of dispatching the monster. Its appearance, however, was so formidable, that they deemed it advisable to open their battery at a most respectful distance. But seeing that all the animal's efforts to extricate itself were fruitless, the men gradually grew more courageous, and approached much nearer. Still, whether from the inefficiency of their weapons, or want of skill, they were unable to make any impression on the tough and almost impenetrable hide of the beast. At length they began to despair, and it was a question if they should not beat a retreat, when an individual more sagacious than the rest stepped forward, and suggested that a hole should be cut in the animal's hide, by which means easy access might be had to its vitals, and they could then destroy it at their leisure! The happy device was loudly applauded, only the legend does not relate with what success.

What a change has come over the same country since Harris, Gordon Cumming, Galton, Andersson, and his brother Northman, Hans Larsen, have carried dismay and destruction into the interior wilds of Southern Africa? Andersson has, during his wanderings in Africa, killed upwards of a hundred rhinoceroses. Hans Larsen has, with his own hand, shot no less than nine of these gigantic animals in one day!

It is further related that when wagons were first introduced into Great Namaqualand, they caused many conjectures, and much astonishment among the natives, who conceived them to be some gigantic animal possessed of vitality. A conveyance of this kind, belonging to the Rev. Mr. Schmelen, once broke down, and was left sticking in the

sand. One day a Bushman came to the owner, and said he had seen his "pack ox" standing in the desert for a long time, with a broken leg: and as he did not observe it had any grass, he was afraid that it would soon die of hunger unless taken away!

What a change also here? "We have now German missionaries, settled not only in Great Namaqua, but in still more remote Damarra-land, toiling however, it is much to be regretted, in vain, among stubborn and savage races of men. And while Galton showed the way for wagons to the corn-lands of Ovambo, with their comparatively civilized inhabitants, Andersson remained behind, and ultimately succeeded in also discovering a wagon route to the celebrated Ngami — the mysterious lake of Southern Africa.

"An European," our Swedish traveller justly remarks, "can form no conception of the impracticable nature of the country in these lands, and the immense difficulties that must be surmounted." To give a faint idea of the obstructions of this kind of travelling, we will suppose a person suddenly placed at the entrance of a primeval forest of unknown extent, never trodden by the foot of man, the haunt of savage beasts, and with soil as yielding as that of an English sand-down; to this must be added a couple of ponderous vehicles, as large as the caravans met with in the streets of London, only a great deal stouter — to each of which are yoked sixteen or twenty refractory oxen. Let him then be told, "Through yonder wood lies your road; nothing is known of it. Make your way as well as you can; but remember, your cattle will perish if they do not get water in the course of two or three days."

These are, however, only some of the numerous and ever-alternating charms and trials of African travel. There is the bush-tick, for example, with which Messrs. Galton and Andersson made acquaintance on first landing at Sand Fountain, in Walfisch Bay. Its bite was so severe and irritating, Mr. A. relates, as almost to drive them mad. "To escape, if possible, the horrible persecution of these blood-thirsty creatures, I took refuge one night in the cart, and was congratulating myself on having, at last, secured a place free from their attacks. But I was mistaken. I had not been long asleep before I was awakened by a disagreeable irritation over my whole body, which shortly became intolerable."

* "Lake Ngami; or, Explorations and Discoveries, during Four Years' Wanderings in the Wilds of South Western Africa." By Charles John Andersson. With a Map, and numerous Illustrations. London: Hurst and Blackett. 1856.

ble; and notwithstanding the night air was very sharp, and the dew heavy, I cast off my clothes, and rolled in the icy cold sand till the blood flowed freely from every pore. Strange as it may appear, I found this expedient serviceable."

By the side of such grievous discomforts there was something to afford pleasure to the sight. Around, every little sand hillock was covered with a creeper, which produced a kind of prickly gourd (called *naras*), of the most delicious flavor. Not only man, but all kinds of animals, from the field-mouse to the ox, and even the feline and canine race, devour it with great avidity. Birds are also very partial to it, more especially ostriches, who, during the *naras* season, are found in great abundance in the places where they grow. "It is," Mr. Anderson justly remarks, "in such instances, more especially, that the mind becomes powerfully impressed with the wise provisions of nature, and the great goodness of the Almighty, who, even from the desert, raises good and wholesome sustenance for man and all his creatures."

Apropos of ostriches, we cannot help giving a recipe for an ostrich egg-omelet; a hole is made at one end of the egg, through which is introduced some salt and pepper. The egg is then well shaken, so as thoroughly to mix the white, the yolk, and the several ingredients mentioned. It is then placed in hot ashes, where it is baked to perfection. An egg thus prepared, although supposed to contain as much as twenty-four of the common fowl-egg, is not considered too much for a single hungry individual.

The dangers arising from sun-stroke, from want of water or from poisoned waters—for the natives often poison the wells and pools to obtain the carcasses of wild animals—are almost trifles compared with the constant annoyance of lions. No sooner had Galton and Andersson started on their perilous wanderings, than these tyrants of Africa killed a horse and a mule, and shortly afterwards openly attacked the party. The stories of our author's prowess against lions would fill a small volume—if not so graphically related as the exploits of Jules Gerard, they are far more numerous, and characterized, if possible, by even greater boldness and daring on the part of the Swede.

The natives, it appears, often deprive the lion of his prey, and actually earn their main

subsistence in this way, becoming a kind of biped jackals. The poorer of the Damaras will also, when hard pressed for food, eat the flesh of beasts of prey themselves, as of the leopard, the hyæna, and many others. Their prowess in hunting is not very remarkable; witness the following incident:

"Some of the servants had gone into the bed of the river to chase away a jackal, when they suddenly encountered a leopard in the act of springing at our goats, which were grazing, unconscious of danger, on the river's bank. On finding himself discovered, he immediately took refuge in a tree, where he was at once attacked by the men. It was, however, not until he had received upwards of sixteen wounds—some of which were inflicted by poisoned arrows—that life became extinct. I arrived at the scene of conflict only to see him die.

"During the whole affair, the men had stationed themselves at the foot of the tree—to the branches of which the leopard was pertinaciously clinging—and, having expended all their ammunition, one of them proposed—and the suggestion was taken into serious consideration—that they should pull him down by the tail!"

Andersson's ideas of ant-hills were for the first time realized at Schmelen's Hope, one of the German missionary stations. Some of the abodes of this interesting though destructive insect, measured as much as one hundred feet in circumference at the base, and rose to about twenty in height! Wild bees make their nests in these gigantic dwellings of the termites, and during the rainy season mushrooms grow in great abundance on their sides, much superior in size and flavor to any found in Europe. Caution is necessary, however, as some are poisonous, probably not so much from difference of species as from different stages of growth.

At the foot of the Omatako mountain our author fell in with a small description of lion, called by the natives Onquirira, which resembles the puma: is nocturnal in its habits, timid, and harmless, preying for the most part on small species of antelopes.

Tall and graceful fan-palms heralded the entrance into Ovampo, where they also fell in with a singular fountain, called Otjikoto, a basin full of water in limestone rock, supplied by a subterranean channel. Our travellers swam into this cavern, and found in it owls and bats, some of the latter dead, and, indeed, mummified, but still clinging to the

rocks. They also caught several scores of small fish, which were very palatable. Galton says in his account of this "wonderful freak of nature," that they had "great fun" at it; shooting ducks and doves, and astonishing the natives both by their swimming and shooting. ("The Narrative of an Explorer," &c., pp. 201, 202.)

As they approached the celebrated corn country of South Africa — Mr. Galton's memorable discovery — grouse began to abound, and of many distinct kinds. At length came the happy moment when, in Galton's words, emerging out of the bushes, the charming corn-country of the Ovampo lay yellow and broad as a sea before them. Fine dense timber-trees, and innumerable palms of all sizes, were scattered over it; part was bare for pasturage, part was thickly covered with high corn-stubble; palisadings, each of which enclosed a homestead, were scattered everywhere over the country. "It was a land of Goshen to us; and even my phlegmatic wagon-driver burst out into exclamations of delight," says Mr. Galton; and we can now let his excellent and worthy companion, Andersson, also relate his sensations on first witnessing this unexpected vision of an agricultural people in Central South Africa:

"The 2nd June will ever be remembered by us. On the afternoon of that day, we first set eye on the beautiful and fertile plains of Ondonga — the country of the Ovampo. Vain would be any attempt to describe the sensations of delight and pleasure experienced by us on that memorable occasion, or to give an idea of the enchanting panoramic scene that all at once opened on our view. Suffice it to say, that instead of the eternal jungles, where every moment we were in danger of being dragged out of our saddles by the merciless thorns, the landscape now presented an apparently boundless field of yellow corn, dotted with numerous peaceful homesteads, and bathed in the soft light of a declining tropical sun. Here and there, moreover, arose gigantic, wide-spreading, and dark-foliaged timber and fruit-trees, whilst innumerable fan-like palms, either singly or in groups, completed the picture. To us it was a perfect elysium, and well rewarded us for every former toil and disappointment. My friend, who had travelled far and wide, confessed he had never seen anything that could be compared to it. Often since have I conjured up to my imagination this scene, and have thought it might not inaptly be compared to stepping out of a hot, white, and

shadowless road, into a park, fresh with verdure, and cool with the umbrage cast down by groups of reverend trees."

Nangoro, the fat king of Ovampo, was disgusted with his visitors because they would not kill elephants for him, and hence they were obliged to renounce an intended excursion to the river Cunene, which flowed to the north, and retrace their steps. Andersson justly sums up of this interesting community, existing hitherto unknown in the interior of South Africa — "It is in vain that poets and philanthropists endeavor to persuade us that savage nations, who have had no previous intercourse with Europeans, are living in a state of the most enviable happiness and purity — where ignorance is virtuous simplicity — poverty, frugality and temperance — and indolence, laudable contempt for wealth. One single day among such people will be sufficient to repudiate these idle notions."

On their way back they were visited by a flock of the *Buphaga Africana*, which, alighting on the backs of the oxen for the purpose of feeding on the ticks with which their hides are covered, threw them into disorder.

The journey eastward, made by Messrs. Galton and Andersson as far as Tunobis on their way to Lake Ngami, is well known from Mr. Galton's previously published account. Mr. Andersson, who persevered, and after refitting himself at the Cape returned to the same spot, says that Mr. Galton's decision was a wise and prudent one. "From after-experience," he says, "I am quite confident that had we tried to push on that year, nothing could have saved us and our beasts of burden from perishing from thirst." It is curious that at the time of Messrs. Galton and Andersson's visit to Tunobis, game was so abundant that the party shot upwards of thirty rhinoceroses, Mr. Andersson slaying no less than eight in one night by himself; and the fountain, although a copious one, was almost nightly drunk dry; yet on the latter traveller's return with his own small party to the same spot, not a wild beast was to be seen, and all suffered in consequence from the pangs of hunger. At Ghanzé our traveller was more successful, several rhinoceroses were shot, affording an abundance of provision. Mr. Andersson relates a curious circumstance here:

"Almost the first animal I saw at this place was a gigantic 'tiger-wolf,' or spotted hyæna, which, to my surprise, instead of seeking safety in flight, remained stationary, grinning in the most ghastly manner. Having approached within twenty paces, I perceived, to my horror, that his fore paws, and the skin and flesh of his front legs had been gnawed away, and that he could scarcely move from the spot. To shorten the sufferings of the poor beast, I seized my opportunity, and knocked him on the head with a stone; and, catching him by the tail, drove my hunting knife deep into his side. But I had to repeat the operation more than once before I could put an end to his existence. I am at a loss how to account for his mangled condition. It certainly could not have been from age, for his teeth were good. Could it be possible that from want of food he had become too weak for further exertions, and that, as a last resource, he had attacked his own body? Or was he an example of that extraordinary species of cruelty said to be practised by the lion on the hyæna, when the latter has the insolence to interfere with the monarch's prey?"

What the traveller is exposed to in exploring these wild regions is also well exemplified by what occurred on leaving the same place:

"In the early part of the day after our departure, I caused my horse to be saddled, and rode off to look for water. About noon, I reached a hollow, of a similar nature as Ghanzé but on a smaller scale. I thought I perceived indications of the existence of water; and, having 'hobbled' the steed, went in search of it. The elephants, however, had so trampled the place, that, though I could not doubt of water being there, I soon found that it was only to be had by a vast deal of labor.

"Whilst reflecting on what was best to do, whether to remain and clear out the pit, or to push on in hopes of finding another watering-place, I observed several small birds flying in and out at a small crevice in the limestone-rock. Running to the spot I discovered a narrow circular aperture, about two feet broad, and perhaps twice as much in depth, with something at the bottom reflecting light. Taking for granted that it was water which thus shone, and being tormented with thirst, I leapt into the hole, and greedily swallowed a large quantity. I was too eager to be able to distinguish its taste; but, having somewhat slaked my burning thirst, my palate resumed its function, and I thought I had never experienced so abominable a flavor. Imagine my horror, when, taking a small portion in the hollow of my hand and holding it up to the light, I found

I had been drinking *blood*, mixed with the refuse of some wild animal! I shall never forget the loathing I felt on making this discovery; and, though my stomach was presently relieved of its nauseous contents, I long retained a qualmish sensation. The mystery was, however, cleared up. On a more close examination of the aperture in question, it was found that a herd of zebras had, like myself, been looking for water, and, in so doing, one of them had fallen in, and been found and killed by the Bushmen. Hence the blood and offal of the unfortunate animal."

At page 414 we have, among other admirable illustrations, one of a scene which all readers of African travel must often have pictured to themselves, that of the congregation of wild beasts at night-time to drink at a vley or pool. The moment taken is that of the approach of elephants, when most other animals, giraffes, zebras, and gnooks, retire to a distance; hyænas growl, lions sulk, and even ponderous rhinoceroses pull up short and listen. The whole scene is well rendered.

Andersson's difficulties were much increased on his perilous journey by a very severe attack of inflammation in his leg, which for a time put it out of his power to kill game for himself and party, and yet this was their only chance of subsistence. We must give some account of our traveller's shooting exploits, for we do not hesitate to say that for variety and interest they equal those recorded of any other African traveller or sportsman:

"From the constant persecution to which the larger game had of late been subjected at Kobis, it had become not only scarce, but wary; and hearing that elephants and rhinoceroses still continued to resort to Abeghan, I forthwith proceeded there on the night in question. Somewhat incautiously I took up my position—alone, as usual—on a narrow neck of land dividing two small pools; the space on either side of my 'skärm' being only sufficient for a large animal to stand between me and the water. I was provided with a blanket, and two or three spare guns.

"It was one of those magnificent tropical moonlight nights, when an indescribably soft and enchanting light is shed over the slumbering landscape; the moon was so bright and clear that I could discern even a small animal at a considerable distance.

"I had just completed my arrangements, when a noise that I can liken only to the passage of a train of artillery, broke the

stillness of the air; it evidently came from the direction of one of the numerous stony paths, or rather tracks, leading to the water, and I imagined it was caused by some wagons that might have crossed the Kalahari. Raising myself partially from my recumbent posture, I fixed my eyes steadily on the part of the bush whence the strange sounds proceeded; but for some time I was unable to make out the cause. All at once, however, the mystery was explained by the appearance of an immense elephant, immediately followed by others, amounting to eighteen. Their towering forms told me at a glance that they were all males. It was a splendid sight to behold so many huge creatures approaching with a free, sweeping, unsuspecting, and stately step. The somewhat elevated ground whence they emerged, and which gradually sloped towards the water, together with the misty night-air, gave an increased appearance of bulk and mightiness to their naturally giant structures.

"Crouching down as low as possible in the 'skärm,' I waited with beating heart and ready rifle the approach of the leading male, who, unconscious of peril, was making straight for my hiding-place. The position of his body, however, was unfavorable for a shot; and, knowing from experience that I had little chance of obtaining more than a single good one, I waited for an opportunity to fire at his shoulder, which, as before said, is preferable to any other part when shooting at night. But this chance, unfortunately, was not afforded till his enormous bulk towered above my head. The consequence was, that, while in the act of raising the muzzle of my rifle over the 'skärm,' my body caught his eye, and, before I could place the piece to my shoulder, he swung himself round, and, with trunk elevated and ears spread, desperately charged me. It was now too late to think of flight, much less of slaying the savage beast. My own life was in imminent jeopardy; and seeing that, if I remained partially erect, he would inevitably seize me with his proboscis, I threw myself on my back with some violence; in which position, and without shouldering the rifle, I fired upwards, at random, towards his chest, uttering, at the same time, the most piercing shouts and cries. The change of position in all human probability saved my life; for, at the same instant, the trunk of the enraged animal descended precisely on the spot where I had been previously crouched, sweeping away the stones (many of a large size) that formed the fore part of my 'skärm,' like so many pebbles. In another moment his broad fore-feet passed directly over my face.

"I now expected nothing short of being crushed to death. But imagine my relief,

when, instead of renewing the charge, he swerved to the left, and moved off with considerably rapidity—most happily without my having received other injuries than a few bruises, occasioned by the falling of the stones. Under Providence, I attribute my extraordinary escape to the confusion of the animal caused by the wound I had inflicted on him, and to the cries elicited from me when in my utmost need.

"Immediately after the elephant had left me I was on my legs, and, snatching up a spare rifle lying at hand, I pointed at him, as he was retreating, and pulled the trigger; but, to my intense mortification, the piece missed fire. It was matter of thankfulness to me, however, that a similar mishap had not occurred when the animal charged; for had my gun not then exploded, nothing, as I conceive, could have saved me from destruction.

"During this incident, the rest of the elephants retreated into the bush; but by the time I had repaired my 'skärm' they reappeared with stealthy and cautious steps on the opposite side of the pool, though so distant that I could not fire with any prospect of success. As they did not approach nearer, I attempted to stalk them, but they would not allow me to come to close quarters; and after a while moved off altogether.

"Whilst pondering over my late wonderful escape, I observed, at a little distance, a huge white rhinoceros protrude his ponderous and mis-shapen head through the bushes, and presently afterwards he approached to within a dozen paces of my ambushade. His broadside was then fully exposed to view, and, notwithstanding I still felt a little nervous from my conflict with the elephant, I lost no time in firing. The beast did not at once fall to the ground, but from appearances I had every reason to believe he would not live long.

"Scarcely had I reloaded when a black rhinoceros of the species Keitloa (a female, as it proved) stood drinking at the water; but her position, as with the elephant in the first instance, was unfavorable for a good shot. As, however, she was very near me, I thought I was pretty sure of breaking her leg and thereby disabling her; and in this I succeeded. My fire seemed to madden her: she rushed wildly forward on three legs, when I gave her a second shot, though apparently with little or no effect. I felt sorry at not being able to end her sufferings at once; but as I was too well acquainted with the habits of the rhinoceros to venture on pursuing her under the circumstances, I determined to wait patiently for daylight, and then destroy her with the aid of my dogs. But it was not to be.

"As no more elephants, or other large game appeared, I thought after a time it might be as well to go in search of the white rhinoceros, previously wounded; and I was not long in finding his carcase; for my ball, as I supposed, had caused his almost immediate death.

"In heading back to my 'skärm,' I accidentally took a turn in the direction pursued by the black rhinoceros, and by ill luck, as the event proved, at once encountered her. She was still on her legs, but her position, as before, was unfavorable. Hoping, however, to make her change it for a better, and thus enable me to destroy her at once, I took up a stone and hurled it at her with all my force; when, snorting horribly, erecting her tail, keeping her head close to the ground, and raising clouds of dust by her feet, she rushed at me with fearful fury. I had only just time to level my rifle and fire before she was upon me; and the next instant, whilst instinctively turning round for the purpose of retreating, she laid me prostrate. The shock was so violent as to send my rifle, powder-flask, and ball-pouch, as also my cap, spinning into the air; the gun, indeed, as I afterwards ascertained, to a distance of fully ten feet. On the beast charging me, it crossed my mind that unless gored at once by her horn, her impetus would be such (after knocking me down, which I took for granted would be the case) as to carry her beyond me, and I might thus be afforded a chance of escape. So, indeed, it happened; for having tumbled me over (in doing which her head, and the forepart of her body, owing to the violence of the charge, was half buried in the sand), and trampled on me with great violence, her fore-quarter passed over my body. Struggling for life, I seized my opportunity, and as she was recovering herself for a renewal of the charge, I scrambled out from between her hind legs.

"But the enraged beast had not yet done with me! Scarcely had I regained my feet before she struck me down a second time, and with her horn ripped up my right thigh (though not very deeply) from near the knee to the hip: with her fore feet, moreover, she hit me a terrific blow on the left shoulder near the back of the neck. My ribs bent under her enormous weight and pressure, and for a moment, I must, as I believe, have lost consciousness—I have at least very indistinct notions of what afterwards took place. All I remember is, that when I raised my head, I heard a furious snorting and plunging amongst the neighboring bushes. I now arose, though with great difficulty, and made my way, in the best manner I was able, towards a large tree near at hand, for shelter; but this precaution was

needless; the beast, for the time at least, showed no inclination further to molest me. Either in the *mêlée*, or owing to the confusion caused by her wounds, she had lost sight of me, or she felt satisfied with the revenge she had taken. Be that as it may, I escaped with life, though sadly wounded and severely bruised, in which disabled state I had great difficulty in getting back to my 'skärm.'

"During the greater part of the conflict I preserved my presence of mind; but after the danger was over, and when I had leisure to collect my scattered and confused senses, I was seized with a nervous affection, causing a violent trembling. I have since killed many rhinoceroses, as well for sport as food; but several weeks elapsed before I could again attack those animals with any coolness.

"About sunrise, Kamapyu, my half-caste boy, whom I had left on the preceding evening about half a mile away, came to the 'skärm' to convey my guns and other things to our encampment. In few words, I related to him the mishap that had befallen me. He listened with seeming incredulity; but the sight of my gashed thigh soon convinced him I was not in joke.

"I afterwards directed him to take one of the guns and proceed in search of the wounded rhinoceros, cautioning him to be careful in approaching the beast, which I had reason to believe was not yet dead. He had only been absent a few minutes, when I heard a cry of distress. Striking my hand against my forehead, I exclaimed, 'Good God! the brute has attacked the lad also!'

"Seizing hold of my rifle, I scrambled through the bushes as fast as my crippled condition would permit; and, when I had proceeded two or three hundred yards, a scene suddenly presented itself that I shall vividly remember to the last days of my existence. Amongst some bushes, and within a couple of yards of each other, stood the rhinoceros and the young savage; the former supporting herself on three legs, covered with blood and froth, and snorting in the most furious manner; the latter petrified with fear—spell-bound, as it were—and riveted to the spot. Creeping, therefore, to the side of the rhinoceros, opposite to that on which the boy was standing, so as to draw her attention from him, I levelled and fired, on which the beast charged wildly to and fro without any distinct object. Whilst she was thus occupied I poured in shot after shot, but thought she would never fall. At length, however, she sank slowly to the ground; and, imagining that she was in her death-agonies, and that all danger was over, I walked unhesitatingly close up to her, and

was on the point of placing the muzzle of my gun to her ear to give her the *coup de grace*, when, to my horror, she once more rose on her legs. Taking a hurried aim, I pulled the trigger, and instantly retreated, with the beast in full pursuit. The race, however, was a short one; for, just as I threw myself into a bush for safety, she fell dead at my feet, so near me, indeed, that I could have touched her with the muzzle of my rifle! Another moment and I should probably have been impaled on her murderous horn, which, though short, was sharp as a razor.

“When reflecting on the wonderful and providential escapes I recently experienced, I could not help thinking that I had been spared for some good purpose, and my heart was lifted in humble gratitude to the Almighty who had thus extended over me His protecting hand.

“The second day after the scenes described, my bruises began to show themselves; and on the third day they were fully developed, giving my body a black and yellow hue. So far as I was aware, none of my bones were broken; but burning and agonizing pains in the region of the chest were clearly symptomatic of severe internal injury. Indeed, at first, serious apprehensions were entertained for my life. After great suffering, however, I recovered; and, as my shooting mania had by this time somewhat cooled down, my whole thoughts were bent on seeing the Ngami. Though my frame was quite unequal to bear fatigue, my spirit would not brook longer delay.

“With the assistance of my men, I therefore mounted my steed on the 23rd of July, and was off for the Lake, leaving my hunting spoils, and other effects, under the care of the Bushman-chief at Kobis.”

The crowning point of all this amount of perilous adventure was at length reached.

“The return of daylight found us again on the move. The morning being cool and pleasant, and our goal near, the whole party was in high spirits, and we proceeded cheerily on our road. I myself kept well ahead in hope of obtaining the first glimpse of Ngami. The country hereabout was finely undulated; and in every distant vale with a defined border I thought I saw a lake. At last, a blue line of great extent appeared in the distance, and I made sure it was the long-sought object; but I was still doomed to disappointment. It turned out to be merely a large hollow, in the rainy season filled with water, but now dry and covered by saline incrustations. Several valleys, separated from each other by ridges of sand, bearing a rank vegetation, were afterwards crossed. On reaching the top of one of these ridges, the na-

tives, who were in advance of our party, suddenly came to a halt, and, pointing straight before them, exclaimed, ‘Ngami! Ngami!’ In an instant I was with the men. There, indeed, at no very great distance, lay spread before me an immense sheet of water, only bounded by the horizon — the object of my ambition for years, and for which I had abandoned home and friends, and risked my life.

“The first sensation occasioned by this sight was very curious. Long as I had been prepared for the event, it now almost overwhelmed me. It was a mixture of pleasure and pain. My temples throbbed, and my heart beat so violently that I was obliged to dismount, and lean against a tree for support, until the excitement had subsided. The reader will no doubt think that thus giving way to my feelings was very childish; but ‘those who know that the first glimpse of some great object which we have read or dreamed of from earliest recollection is ever a moment of intensest enjoyment, will forgive the transport.’ I felt unfeignedly thankful for the unbounded goodness and gracious assistance, which I had experienced from Providence throughout the whole of this prolonged and perilous journey. My trials had been many; but, my dearest aspirations being attained, the difficulties were all forgotten.”

A great variety of animals were met with around the lake, as may be naturally imagined, including elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, giraffes, koodoos, pallahs, &c.; but the greatest curiosities were two new species of water antelopes, called nakong and leche; they were like the water buck (*aigocerus ellipsiprymnus*), and both large, beautiful, and very interesting animals.

Mr. Andersson adds materially to the interest of his details concerning the lake, by a trip made for some distance up its chief feeder — the Teoge — on whose banks there was a perfect exuberance of animal life, and where were also herds of buffaloes, animals that had not been met with before, and where also occurred that African curse of domestic animals, the tsetse fly. The bite of this most noxious insect is fatal to the life of domestic animals, yet strange to say, does not appear to be so to wild beasts, for they feed undisturbed in parts known to be infested by this most pestiferous of insects.*

* While the “terrible Tsaktsalya, or Zimb,” of Bruce, the existence of which was so long treated as a fable, is noticed in the last and cheap edition of Kirby and Spence’s Entomology (a great boon to the public), there is no mention made of the far more terrible Tsetse, the most fatal of all known insects.

Mr. Andersson had reached Lake Ngami by means of pack and ride oxen, but his collection of specimens of natural history, ivory and other objects so increased there, that he was obliged to return to Namaqua-land for a wagon to remove them. Of this journey, of his return to the lake, and of his ultimate journey home he gives a few details, the present volume having, as he says, already swelled to such a bulk. He had, no doubt

much more to tell us than the fact of being woke out of sleep by a lion purring in his face, but we must be satisfied with this first instalment. Never has a more interesting or a more beautifully got up work of African travel been presented to the public; it leaves one as if oppressed with a nightmare of elephants, lions, rhinoceroses, behemoths, and all the most uncouth and gigantic forms of animal life.

Lectures on the Life, Genius, and Insanity of Cowper. By George B. Cheever, D.D. (Nisbet & Co.)

THESE Lectures, by Dr. Cheever, are not so much a defence of Cowper as an attack of Southey:—a sectarian view of the life, sufferings, failures, and excellencies of a man of genius,—the narrowness of which excludes everything like charity for a comprehension of diversities of creed—diversities of service—diversities of obligation. We are as far from acquiescence in the dogmatism and denunciations put forth by Southey as Dr. Cheever himself. The Poet's virtues were not those to which sympathy most cordially attaches itself:—they were those of self-support—independence, courage, and patience—which bring their own reward to their possessor;—virtues which, inasmuch as they crave little assistance, gain but a grudging recognition, and can hardly be worn for armor, through years of struggle with life and fortune, without the wearer being hardened on the surface (perhaps deeper) by the perpetual pressure of cuirass, hauberk, and "helmet barred." But to doubt Southey's religion because he disapproved of Dissent,—because, in Cowper's case, he found the influences brought to bear on the poet's mind too harsh, gloomy, and severe for a spirit so tremulously conscientious, and for affections so tender, so true, but so timid,—is to outdo Southey's faults—to assert the infallibility of a dogma, as cruelly as Southey did,—with fewer intellectual claims and credentials. Dr. Cheever should remember that if Cowper strove to turn the lucid intervals betwixt fit and fit of distemperature to what he conceived their best account (cherished, throughout weal and woe, with a solicitude and a constancy which are seldom vouchsafed to the afflicted), Southey, by incessant labor to recommend what he thought right, and to improve his "ten talents," was enabled during a long life to cherish others—to be the stay and shelter of those around him—and to give the bounty of time and interest to many obscure and struggling persons. By this course of righteous endeavor he was, at last, himself worn into that mental nothingness which he had so long watched in others, and so tenderly treated, when writing of the Author of "The Task" and "John Gilpin." This book, we repeat, has not been a labor of love or justice so much as a controver-

sial task. It will carry with it no readers, save those who were agreed with Dr. Cheever ere they began to read: for the logic is weak—the literary accomplishment displayed is small—and the uncharitableness is too active and all-pervading to be excused.—*Athenæum*.

THE NEW STEAM-FARMER.—I devoted two days to the examination of the operation of Boydell's Traction Steam-engine as a locomotive and tractive power, and have come to the conclusion that it is "a great success." This success is owing to the endless and wide railway attached to the circumference of the wheels, which gives a fulcrum for the lever, and a bearing sufficiently wide to carry a great weight on soft ground, without imbedding in the soil. Hence the avoidance of friction and clogging. We might illustrate this by a sportsman on the mud oozes, whose feet would sink in, and thus render his power unavailable; but by attaching to his feet wide pieces of board, the pressure is diminished to a bearing condition. Thus, in the case of Mr. Boydell's machine, although it weighed nine tons, its impress was scarcely perceptible, where a horse's foot left a deep indentation. The engine walked from Camden-town to Acton, taking in tow its four-wheeled wagon, with coals, and four heavy iron ploughs, and water enough for four hours' work. When on the soft turnip-field—after a night's rain—it drew after it ploughs, scarifier, &c., with perfect ease, and then walked home again to Camden-town. It can ascend an acclivity of one in three, which is nearly walking up stairs, our stairs being one in two. It can back, advance, or stop instantaneously, the pinion being shifted from the cogs of the driving-wheel; and the power thus suddenly released is carried off by a separate fly-wheel, which may be used for driving thrashing-machines, mill-stones, or other purposes. In fact, instead of a farmer sending for and sending back a six horse-power engine and thrashing-machine, requiring in each trip four horses, this machine will move itself anywhere—draw the corn to market, bring home manure, and do the cultivation and work of the farm. The machine can turn as easily as a common wagon, and does not mind a deep furrow or a side-hill.—*Abridged from a Letter from Mr. Mechi, of Tiptree Hall, in the Journal of the Society of Arts.*