

From the Spectator.

HUNTING LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA.*

ROSALEYN GORDON CUMMING, of Altyre, a kinsman of Argyle, was born with as innate a love for sport as Virgil's bees for making honey. At home he became a first-rate angler, sportsman, and deer-stalker; in the pursuit of oölogy he braved the risks of the hardy sea-bird fowler—"descending the loftiest precipices with a rope round his waist." In 1839 he sailed to join his regiment in India, and laid the foundation of a collection of trophies of the chase which has since swelled to gigantic proportions. The climate, however, disagreed with Mr. Cumming, and he returned to Britain and its sports; till the restrictions of preserves, game-keepers, boundaries, and what not, disgusted him. "Longing once more for the freedom of nature and the life of the wild hunter—so far preferable to that of the mere sportsman," he resolved to visit "the rolling prairies and Rocky Mountains of the Far West." With this view, the sportsman obtained a commission in the Royal Veteran Newfoundland Companies; but "speedily discovered that the prospect of getting from the barrack-square would be small." He effected an exchange into the Cape Riflemen; but neither did this service permit the sort of free-and-easy life which he desired. He therefore sold out; and, after employing himself in purchasing wagons and oxen, hiring servants and preparing arms and outfit, he started from Graham's Town for the interior, in October, 1843; and was so well satisfied with his first adventure, that he passed five successive years altogether in sporting excursions in the interior of South Africa.

The direction in which Mr. Cumming travelled from Graham's Town, was north-north-east. The extent was about thirteen degrees of latitude from 34° to 21° south, and about eight of longitude—24° to 32° east. Beyond the post of Colesberg and the Orange river the country is unsettled; but missionary stations are found within one hundred and fifty miles of the Limpopo; along whose banks Mr. Cumming proceeded for several hundred miles, diverging, as was his practice on all occasions, to the right or left, according as the probability of finding game tempted him. Unless long exposure had blunted the sportsman to hardship, and the rugged desert country that intervened between the settlements and his hunting-grounds had biassed his judgment, the country seems better watered and less sterile than one would expect in the heart of Africa in the vicinity of the tropic of Capricorn. Nor would it appear to be unhealthy; for although Mr. Cumming was attacked by rheumatism and fever, his exposure and exertions must be borne in mind, as well as that rheumatism is independent of African malaria.

* Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa. With Notices of the Native Tribes, and Anecdotes of the Chase of the Lion, Elephant, Hippopotamus, Giraffe, Rhinoceros, &c. By Rosaleyn Gordon Cumming, Esq., of Altyre. With Illustrations. In two volumes. Published by Murray.

Sport and the free life of the hunter, not geographical description or discovery, were the objects of Mr. Cumming; and he enjoyed them to the fullest extent. In the neighborhood of the British frontier various kinds of antelopes, and those strange African animals that often combine in themselves the features of horse, ox and stag, were rife. As he advanced, buffaloes, hyænas, leopards, lions, rhinoceroses, giraffes, elephants, and at last, upon the banks and in the waters of the far Limpopo, the hippopotamus and crocodile rewarded his exertions. And these not few and far between, but in numbers which made his attacks upon the noblest game look more like a battue than hard-working sport. Mr. Cumming has knocked over half a dozen elephants or more at a time, chased and slaughtered camelopards in like manner, killed and carried off hippopotamuses as men do deer at home; and grew so bold that two or three lions were less to him than an overdriven ox to a London alderman. He met the kings of beasts in open plain, rode with them, at them, across them, and around them, in the execution of his tactics; knocked them over right and left, and, like Coriolanus among the Volscians, alone he did it. Mr. Cumming ascribes more courage to the lion than some modern travellers have allowed. His narratives certainly support this view to some extent; but the courage seems rather the product of ignorance. The lion despised the natives; he knew not the power and prowess of the Cumming till too late, very often. As soon as he "got a wrinkle" upon the matter, he endeavored to escape his fate. The following is a case adduced in proof of the courage of the king of beasts; but it rather shows his skill. It was a demonstration to cover a retreat.

At no time is the lion so much to be dreaded as when his partner has got small young ones. At that season he knows no fear, and, in the coolest and most intrepid manner, he will face a thousand men. A remarkable instance of this kind came under my own observation which confirmed the reports I had before heard from the natives. One day, when out elephant hunting in the territory of the Baseleka, accompanied by two hundred and fifty men, I was astonished suddenly to behold a majestic lion slowly and steadily advancing towards us with a dignified step and undaunted bearing, the most noble and imposing that can be conceived. Lashing his tail from side to side, and growling haughtily, his terribly expressive eye resolutely fixed upon us, and displaying a show of ivory well calculated to inspire terror among the timid Bechuanas, he approached. A headlong flight of the two hundred and fifty men was the immediate result; and, in the confusion of the moment, four couples of my dogs, which they had been leading, were allowed to escape in their couples. These instantly faced the lion; who, finding that by his bold bearing he had succeeded in putting his enemies to flight, now became solicitous for the safety of his little family, with which the lioness was retreating in the background. Facing about he followed after them with a haughty and independent step, growling fiercely at the dogs which trotted along on either side of him. Three

troops of elephants having been discovered a few minutes previous to this, upon which I was marching for the attack, I, with the most heartfelt reluctance, reserved my fire. On running down the hillside to endeavor to recall my dogs, I observed for the first time the retreating lioness with four cubs. About twenty minutes afterwards, two noble elephants repaid my forbearance.

In this instance the monarch and family retreated before the hunter; and well would it have been for the lions had they always made a run of it when rarer game was not in ken. See what happened to two out of four, from their committing the error of Sir John Moore in Spain, and not sufficiently soon determining upon "a movement in retreat." A report had been brought into the camp that four kings were holding a royal feast over some slain zebras in the neighborhood.

I instantly saddled up two horses, and, directing my boys to lead after me as quickly as possible my small remaining pack of sore-footed dogs, I rode forth, accompanied by Carey, carrying a spare gun, to give battle to the four grim lions. As I rode out of the peninsula, they showed themselves on the bank of the river; and, guessing that their first move would be a disgraceful retreat, I determined to ride so as to make them think that I had not observed them, until I should be able to cut off their retreat from the river, across the open vley, to the endless forest beyond. That point being gained, I knew that they, still doubtful of my having observed them, would hold their ground on the river's bank until my dogs came up, when I could more advantageously make the attack.

I cantered along, holding as if I meant to pass the lions at a distance of a quarter of a mile, until I was opposite to them, when I altered my course and inclined a little nearer. The lions then showed symptoms of uneasiness; they rose to their feet, and, overhauling us for half a minute, disappeared over the bank. They reappeared, however, directly, a little further down; and, finding that their present position was bare, they walked majestically along the top of the bank to a spot a few hundred yards lower, where the bank was well wooded. Here they seemed half inclined to await my attack; two stretched out their massive arms and lay down in the grass, and the other two sat up like dogs upon their haunches. Deeming it probable that when my dogs came up and I approached they would still retreat and make a bolt across the open vley, I directed Carey to canter forward and take up the ground in the centre of the vley about four hundred yards in advance; whereby the lions would be compelled either to give us battle or swim the river, which, although narrow, I knew they would be very reluctant to do.

I now sat in my saddle, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the dogs; and while thus momentarily disengaged, I was much struck with the majestic and truly appalling appearance which these four noble lions exhibited. They were all full-grown, immense males; and I felt, I must confess, a little nervous, and very uncertain as to what might be the issue of the attack. When the dogs came up I rode right in towards the lions. They sprang to their feet, and trotted slowly down along the bank of the river, once or twice halting and facing about for half a minute. Immediately below them there was a small determined bend in the

stream, forming a sort of peninsula. Into this bend they disappeared; and the next moment I was upon them with my dogs. They had taken shelter in a dense angle of the peninsula, well sheltered by high trees and reeds. Into this retreat the dogs at once boldly followed them, making a loud barking; which was instantly followed by the terrible voices of the lions, which turned about and charged to the edge of the cover. Next moment, however, I heard them plunge into the river; when I sprang from my horse, and running to the top of the bank, I saw three of them ascending the opposite bank, the dogs following. One of them bounded away across the open plain at top speed; but the other two, finding themselves followed by the dogs, immediately turned to bay. It was now my turn; so taking them coolly right and left with my little rifle, I made the most glorious double shot that a sportsman's heart could desire, disabling them both in the shoulder before they were even aware of my position; then snatching my other gun from Carey, who that moment had ridden up to my assistance, I finished the first lion with a shot about the heart, and brought the second to a standstill by disabling him in his hind quarters. He quickly crept into a dense, wide, dark green bush, in which for a long time it was impossible to obtain a glimpse of him; at length, a clod of earth falling near his hiding place, he made a move which disclosed to me his position, when I finished him with three more shots, all along the middle of his back. Carey swam across the river to flog off the dogs; and when these came through to me I beat up the peninsula in quest of the fourth lion; which had, however, made off. We then crossed the river a little higher up, and proceeded to inspect the noble prizes I had won. Both lions were well up in their years: I kept the skin and skull of the finest specimen, and only the nails and the tail of the other, one of whose canine teeth was worn down to the socket with caries, which seemed very much to have affected his general condition.

This was distant firing. At times, however, it came to closer quarters with elephants, and to positive taction with our traveller's first captured hippopotamus, when he performed what he calls "a waltz" in the water.

I took the sea-cow next me, and with my first ball I gave her a mortal wound, knocking loose a great plate on the top of her skull. She at once commenced plunging round and round, and then occasionally remained still, sitting for a few minutes on the same spot. On hearing the report of my rifle, two of the others took up stream, and the fourth dashed down the river; they trotted along, like oxen, at a smart pace, as long as the water was shallow. I was now in a state of very great anxiety about my wounded sea-cow, for I feared that she would get down into deep water, and be lost like the last one; her struggles were still carrying her down stream, and the water was becoming deeper. To settle the matter, I accordingly fired a second shot from the bank; which, entering the roof of her skull, passed out through her eye; she then kept continually splashing round and round in a circle in the middle of the river. I had great fears of the crocodiles, and I did not know that the sea-cow might not attack me. My anxiety to secure her, however, overcame all hesitation; so, divesting myself of my leathers, and armed with a sharp knife, I dashed into the water, which at first took

me up to my arm-pits, but in the middle was shallower.

As I approached behemoth, her eye looked very wicked. I halted for a moment, ready to dive under the water if she attacked me; but she was stunned, and did not know what she was doing; so, running in upon her, and seizing her short tail, I attempted to incline her course to land. It was extraordinary what enormous strength she had in the water. I could not guide her in the slightest; and she continued to splash and plunge, and blow and make her circular course, carrying me along with her as if I was a fly on her tail. Finding her tail gave me but a poor hold, as the only means of securing my prey, I took out my knife, and, cutting two deep parallel incisions through the skin on her rump, and lifting this skin from the flesh, so that I could get in my two hands, I made use of this as a handle; and after some desperate hard work, sometimes pushing and sometimes pulling, the sea-cow continuing her circular course all the time and I holding on at her rump like grim death, eventually I succeeded in bringing this gigantic and most powerful animal to the bank. Here the bushman quickly brought me a stout buffalo-rhein from my horse's neck, which I passed through the opening in the thick skin, and moored behemoth to a tree; I then took my rifle and sent a ball through the centre of her head, and she was numbered with the dead.

These extracts will serve to furnish a notion of the sort of sport enjoyed by Mr. Cumming, but will give no idea of its variety, or of his adventures; sometimes only the common occurrences of the wilderness, at other times incidents pregnant with danger and privation, which must have ended fatally to a man less hardy and experienced than himself. The novelty of the sports and the variety of adventure impart, of course, considerable interest to the book; but its great attraction is its freshness and nature. As soon as the reader finds himself across the frontier, he feels himself in a new region. The animals, the vegetation, the scenery, the modes of living, are all novel and striking—"free as Nature first made man;" and the very faults of Mr. Cumming tend to bring out the qualities of his subjects. The closest approach to him in subjects and adventure is Major Harris; though we think Mr. Cumming has the advantage in the wildness and freshness of his scenery, as Harris excels Cumming in literary judgment and art. At the same time, the coarseness, the repetitions and the barrack and sporting mind of the latter, conjoined as they are with considerable vigor and a faculty of observation, seem to give a truer reflex of the nature he is describing than the more skillful depiction of Harris. We luxuriate in the exuberance of animal and (where there is water) of vegetable life; we are disposed to place more reliance upon the pictures of Cumming, save a grain of wonder at some of the sporting stories. This reliability is increased by the absence of scientific objects, and indeed the author's acquaintance with science, as well as by his perfect apparent openness, not merely in his confessions of nervousness, but of impositions upon the natives by encouraging their superstitions

and providing them with charms. A less open person, too, would have softened the style of his slaughter; for the size of the animals protracts their death struggles, while the lordly lion, and the "half reasoning elephant" meet their end with a kind of dignity, or submission to destiny, which excites the reader's sympathy for anything but their destroyer. This want of literary art leads to repetitions of the same kind of thing in his different journeys and adventures, and to a good deal of minuteness; which, however, serves to exhibit more completely the life the author was leading.

This book is a singular illustration of "how use doth breed a habit in a man." By long custom Mr. Cumming got to face the fiercest beasts of prey, and the mightiest animals—the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus—as a matter of course; encouraging the idea, that when the civilized mind is seated in a sound body, and assisted by machinery, (for a gun is a machine,) there is hardly any feat of endurance, exertion or victory over brute mind and matter, to which it may not be brought. At last he absolutely got to play with danger, but ready at the instant for the deadly conflict.

As I was examining the spoor of the game by the fountain, I suddenly detected an enormous old rock-snake stealing in beneath a mass of rock beside me. He was truly an enormous snake, and, having never before dealt with this species of game, I did not exactly know how to set about capturing him. Being very anxious to preserve his skin entire, and not wishing to have recourse to my rifle, I cut a stout and tough stick about eight feet long, and having lightened myself of my shooting belt, I commenced the attack. Seizing him by the tail, I tried to get him out of his place of refuge; but I hauled in vain—he only drew his large folds firmer together; I could not move him. At length I got a rhein round one of his folds about the middle of his body, and Kleinboy and I commenced hauling away in good earnest.

The snake, finding the ground too hot for him, relaxed his coils, and suddenly bringing round his head to the front, he sprang out at us like an arrow, with his immense and hideous mouth opened to its largest dimensions; and before I could get out of his way, he was clean out of his hole, and made a second spring, throwing himself forward about eight or ten feet, and snapping his horrid fangs within a foot of my naked legs. I sprang out of his way, and getting a hold of the green bough I had cut, I returned to the charge. The snake now glided along at top speed: he knew the ground well, and was making for a mass of broken rocks where he would have been beyond my reach: but before he could gain this place of refuge, I caught him two or three tremendous whacks on the head. He, however, held on, and gained a pool of muddy water; which he was rapidly crossing when I again belabored him, and at length reduced his pace to a stand. We then hanged him by the neck to a bough of a tree, and in about fifteen minutes he seemed dead; but he again became very troublesome through the operation of skinning, twisting his body in all manner of ways. This serpent measured fourteen feet.

The most valuable parts of Mr. Cumming's book are those which describe the habits and appearances of the animals; as he saw them under more favorable circumstances than perhaps any other observer with equal powers of observation. We can only quote one of these passages from among the many we had noted.

The springbok is so termed by the colonists on account of its peculiar habit of springing or taking extraordinary bounds, rising to an incredible height in the air, when pursued. The extraordinary manner in which springboks are capable of springing is best seen when they are chased by a dog. On these occasions, away start the herd, with a succession of strange perpendicular bounds, rising with curved loins high into the air, and at the same time elevating the snowy folds of long white hair on their haunches and along their back, which imparts to them a peculiar fairy-like appearance, different from any other animal. They bound to the height of ten or twelve feet, with the elasticity of an India-rubber ball; clearing at each spring from twelve to fifteen feet of ground, without apparently the slightest exertion. In performing the spring, they appear for an instant as if suspended in the air, when down come all four feet again together, and, striking the plain, away they soar again as if about to take flight. The herd only adopt this motion for a few hundred yards, when they subside into a light elastic trot, arching their graceful necks and lowering their noses to the ground, as if in a sportive mood. Presently pulling up, they face about, and reconnoitre the object of their alarm. In crossing any path or wagon-road on which men have lately trod, the springbok invariably clears it by a single surprising bound; and when a herd of perhaps many thousands have to cross a track of the sort, it is extremely beautiful to see how each antelope performs this feat, so suspicious are they of the ground on which their enemy, man, has trodden. They bound in a similar manner when passing to leeward of a lion, or any other animal of which they entertain an instinctive dread.

From the Tribune.

"THE CHRISTIAN REVIEW" (July) is entitled to a high place among the religious quarterlies, both on account of the well arranged variety of its contents and the truly liberal and scholar-like tone of its discussions. The articles on "Coleridge and Southey," "Justin Martyr," "Geology and Revelation," "Campbell's Lives of the Chief Justices," "President Wayland's Report on University Education," and "The Pope's Return to Rome," are all written by men of distinguished ability, and exhibit an extent of research and vigor of composition which would do honor to any of our periodicals. We quote a passage from the notice of Coleridge and Southey.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF COLERIDGE.

The appearance and air of Mr. Coleridge were decidedly clerical, but he soon struck you as "a king of men." He well personified "Church and State, according to [his] *Idea* of each."* Without the affectation or any remarkable professions of seriousness, he sustained, more than any other man

* The title, nearly verbatim, of a favorite tract he published in 1830.

we have seen, a serious carriage engagingly. There was a chastened and imperturbable solemnity about him, rising, when he said his best things, (spoke against the philosophy of mere expediency, or asserted the claims of the Eternal Word,) into an unaffected majesty, and the entire *command* of all present. It was never broken in upon, in our hearing, by the utterance of anything foolish or light. We were never in the company of mortal man to whom such a thing would have seemed so utterly unbecoming, or from whom it would have burst upon one, creating so much surprise.

We do not remember to have seen him laugh. It was too gross an expression of feeling for the keeping and comfort of his presence—(that word comfort, by the way, being one which he would often claim as belonging only to "English hearts and homes.") He was tall, slightly corpulent; had a head whose indescribable promises of mental excellence made all his friends tolerate Phrenology who did not believe in it; and a forehead of surpassing manly beauty. To see him take off his hat, as the writer has done, and address a kind of Improvisatori Hymn to the Sun, as he walked with him down Highgate Hill to the "Great Metropolis," was no faint image of an Apollo unveiling himself. That forehead was certainly such an outwork of power within, as no one that studied it could forget, or would hope to see well copied by art.

Mr. Coleridge, without attempting any peculiarities of dress or manners, was only like himself in these things. While we knew him, he always wore well-made black clothes—walked always with a drawing-room gentleness and dignity. Everything about him was rotund, impressive, graceful—down to the silk stocking and plastic shoe of his handsome leg and foot. No boot, with or without the modern disguise of pantaloons, was ever drawn over them. It was impossible for any such article to be made that would not have been out of keeping—been as clumsy in its appearance there as a club-foot. After some acquaintance, it would be observed how much he could engage to his favorite themes the respectful attention of ladies; and that children* were delighted with him. It has been told everywhere, since his death, that men of the highest rank and first attainments in England would gladly assist—might we say, be contentedly the organ-blowers at his unrivalled Conversations. We were acquainted with a literary man who had been both in Dr. Johnson's and Coleridge's society. He gave to the latter all the learning, command of language, and impressive power of Johnson, with, what he so much lacked, the *suaviter in modo*—uniform gentleness and sweetness of manner.

SOUTHEY.

Mr. Southey had exactly the appearance of an elder son of Coleridge's. There was not a difference of three years between them in age, but twenty in apparent vigor. He, too, was tall; of highly finished and conciliatory address; had a noble, but somewhat thin, Roman visage, prominent, penetrating and very beautiful eyes, and abundance of black, curling hair. Perhaps he was unusually

* We remember his stepping into a house, where some prattlers looked shyly at him and ran. "Ah!" said he to their mother, "you cannot enter a sheep meadow but the lambs will turn a fine neck and mild eyes on you and scamper off, whatever their seniors may do."