

AFRICAN SPORTING.

IN perusing the works of late explorers, nothing strikes us more forcibly than their general adherence to the code and practice of Nimrod. In this respect they differ very materially from their illustrious predecessors. Some men have threaded the palm-lined sinuosities of the Niger, or ascended far beyond the roaring cataracts of the Nile, through dusky jungles and swamp-like lakes, in the hope that they might ere long behold, far away on the horizon, the blue outline of the mysterious Mountains of the Moon; and this they have done without pausing in their route, even to take a snap-shot at a crocodile basking on a sand-spit. Some adventurous gentlemen there are, who, we verily believe, would take the trouble of ascending Mount Ararat, at the imminent risk of ophthalmia, for the sole purpose of marking the height of the barometer at its summit, and who would consider themselves unworthy of their calling, if they tarried for an instant to send a bullet after a flying antelope. Put Mr Porter into Central Africa, and his only thought would be to collect statistics enough connected with Timbuctoo to fill a couple of Parliamentary blue-books. Send a geologist to Hecla, and he will hammer away at igneous rocks, and discourse of Plutonian theories, utterly insensible of the drear grandeur of the Jokuls, or the rush of the steaming Geyser. Botanists there are who, to secure a rare specimen of a plant, no longer than your little finger, would boldly venture amidst a herd of grazing buffaloes. Lord Monboddo would have wandered among the Hottentots from kraal to kraal, blind and deaf to every sight and sound of nature, blind to everything save that glorious vision—alas! never destined to be realised—of a human child with the prehensile tail of a monkey! There is great shrewdness, and more truth than the world supposes, in Peter Pindar's lively sketch of Sir Joseph Banks in pursuit of a winged Emperor

of Morocco, until his enthusiasm for the chase seduced him into a leap which ended in the destruction of the hot-house. It is the way with all men, dear reader, you and ourselves being no especial exceptions to the rule. Ask us to sally forth on an exploratory journey, in any direction whatever, and we straightway mount our particular hobby, and ride into the heart of the wilderness.

We know something of geology, have a smattering of botany, can handle a theodolite, are partial to butterflies, conversant, to our misfortune, with blue-books, and can even tell the time of day by taking a solar observation. But we frankly confess, that not for one of these objects alone would we penetrate as far as Dalnacardoch, much less lave our limbs in the native pools of the hippopotamus. At this season of the year, we have not much appetite for science. A nobler career is before us. The time of the grouse and the blackcock is nigh at hand, and ere another month has gone by, we trust that we shall have handled fud and feather abundantly on the northern moors.

Mr Roualeyn Gordon Cumming's book has come most opportunely to hand. He is an explorer of the kind which we desiderate most in our present mood; and he is fairly entitled to take rank at the head of travelled sportsmen. Descended from the old stem of the Comyns of Badenoch, whose pedigree is coeval with that of the Scottish kings; bred up a hunter from his youth, and inured to the hardships of the hills—it is little wonder if he carried to distant lands that enthusiasm for the chase which he had imbibed at home, and sought out in Southern Africa a nobler quarry even than the red-deer that drinks at the fountains of the Spey. And what better could he have done? There is little stirring, in this modern Europe of ours, to give employment to the man of strong arm and daring courage. The days have gone by when a Scot-

tish gentleman could have taken honourable service in the king's body-guard of France; or, under Gustavus Adolphus, have contributed to the dressing of the Swedish feathers, "whilk," saith Dalgetty, "your honour must conceive to be double-pointed stakes, shod with iron at each end, and planted before the squad of pikes to prevent an onfall of the cavalry; the same being not altogether so soft to encounter as the plumage of a goose." Long before the editorial revolutions and propagandist rebellions, which have been the disgrace of the Continent, broke out, the crack of Mr Cumming's rifle had resounded in the primeval forests of Bamangwato; and, even had it been otherwise, our author could have had no concern in the quarrel. Knighterrantry, we fear, is dead and gone. We may linger with fondness over the heroic story of Sir James of Douglas charging the Moor on the fields of Arragon at the head of his Scottish lances, or that of Norman Leslie riding back to the French camp all covered with wounds, and falling lifeless at the feet of the noble Constable de Montmorencie. Those things belong to romance: we live in the days of dull reality and free trade. We cannot imagine Joseph Hume presiding at a tournament, or Bright, arrayed in complete armour, caracoling proudly in the lists. As for the barracks, we apprehend that a sojourn there is not much more enviable than the occupancy of the three-legged stool in a counting-house. So, upon the whole, we think that Mr Cumming did the very wisest thing he could do in shouldering his rifle, and marching away from civilisation, in front of his waggons, towards the unexplored districts of the Limpopo.

Five years there did he lead the hunter's life—with what success these volumes, and his African museum, will show. Travelling in Africa is not quite so easy a matter as it is in other quarters of the globe. The American huntsman, who meditates a campaign in the Rocky Mountains, is apostolical in the simplicity of his preparation, compared with him who proposes to penetrate some thousand miles beyond the boundary of the broad Garcep. In that land, as in

the deserts of Arabia, to be solitary is to be lost for ever. Even with a caravan—for such we may fairly denominate a well-appointed establishment of waggons—there is frequent and imminent danger. Sometimes the commissariat fails altogether, and for days not a head of antelope is visible on the surface of the sterile plain. Sometimes the wains stick fast in the centre of a rising river, and it is even betting whether the chattels of the adventurers escape, or are swept down to gratify the indolent curiosity of the hippopotami. Another while the track lies through a region where water cannot be found; the deceitful courses are dried up, or a bitter brine arises in the pit which the traveller digs in the feverish intensity of his thirst. Then there is a scourge called the African distemper, which is fearfully fatal to horses. It comes on without warning or apparent cause, is almost incurable, and as rapid in its progress as the plague. Also, in certain parts, a diabolical insect, called the "tsetse"—which Mr Cumming describes as bearing some resemblance to our acrimonious acquaintance, the Scottish "klegg"—fastens upon the cattle; and so terrible is its bite, that the animal once inoculated with the poison never recovers. We believe that some such pestilential volatile is said to be found in Norway, where naturalists have impaled it on pins, and catalogued it under the alluring designation of "*furia infernalis*." Whether the hyperborean or meridional gallinipper is the worst, it would be hard to say; and we devoutly hope we shall never be enabled to solve the problem from the results of our personal experience. There are, moreover, other contingencies for which the traveller must prepare. Oxen oftentimes go astray, and their "spoor," or track, is not always distinguishable. When followed up, it is by no means unusual for the hunter of the African deserts to detect a fine lion, with his lioness and cubs, and may be a score or so of jackals, indulging in a rapid luncheon upon his property, whilst hundreds of vultures, perched upon the bushes around, officiate as supernumerary beef-eaters. Not even the camp is impregnable, if

Leo should happen to be inordinately appetised. Accompanied by his lighter but even fiercer relative the leopard, he prowls around the waggons, especially if the night be stormy, his eyes glaring through the darkness like two orbs of dusky fire. The breeze brings the scent of the oxen strong and heavy to his nostrils—the mighty brute can no longer resist the fascination of the bovine perfume—his bowels yearn for sirloin—and, with a roar of hunger, lion and leopard bound madly into the fold, and bury their claws and fangs in the carcase of the nearest victim.

All these mischances, against the occurrence of which no African traveller can guard, necessitate the attendance of a considerable stud and team. Nor are dogs less necessary, though, we regret to say, even more liable to accident. To draw a cover for a lion or a wild boar, or to hold a buffalo at bay, is a service of uncommon danger. The treacherous crocodile, lurking in the still water, but too often carries away the hound; and others may chance to be impaled upon the dagger-like horns of the larger kinds of antelopes. So much for the live stock which must be fed and tended in the wilderness.

We have no doubt that a good many excellent people, connected with the calico trade, will shrug their shoulders at Mr Cumming's narrative, and characterise the whole expedition as a freak of absolute insanity. To be consistent, they must include in their catalogue of lunatics the illustrious Bruce of Kinnaird; since, in a mere profit-and-loss point of view, it would be impossible to maintain that a draught of water from the fountain of the Nile was an adequate compensation for all the evils endured by that enterprising traveller. Indeed, they may say the same thing of the whole race of explorers, and impeach the intellect of every gentleman who becomes the tenant of a deer-forest, or who crosses over to Norway for the avowed purpose of salmon-fishing. It may please them, however, to know that Mr Cumming had a more practical object in his head than mere indulgence in the excitement of the chase. He tells us that he had resolved to form a collection of hunting

trophies, and objects of interest in science and natural history; and he has certainly succeeded in framing a museum such as never yet was achieved by the personal labour and energy of a single man. Further, he was by no means insensible to the advantages of barter. He had a very fair notion of the marketable price of elephants' tusks and hippopotamus' teeth, of peltry and of ostrich feathers; and as these articles were notoriously plentiful in the interior, he resolved to do a bit of trade with the natives in his hours of necessary relaxation. These two objects materially increased the bulk and variety of his equipment. He had two large Cape waggons, crammed with articles as multifarious as the contents of a grocery store. Even if he had given no other proof of the strength of his nerves, the fact that he reposed in peace with some four hundred pounds of gunpowder stowed away beneath his bed, would be received as abundant evidence. In his attendants he was not particularly fortunate. His European body-servant, who turned out to be a fugitive London cab-driver, very soon deserted him; and his tail, beside mere camp-followers, ultimately consisted of four Hottentots, Carollus, Cobus, Stofolus, and Klein-boy, gentlemen who subsequently gave him an immense deal of trouble and vexation. In the first place they drank like fishes, and had a facetious mode, when their master was absent, of extracting spirits from the cask with a gimblet. In the second place, not one of them would ride manfully up to an elephant. This was perhaps natural; but then they were engaged for that particular service, and had no right to volunteer if they lacked the courage to execute. In a skirmish with lions they were worse than useless, generally taking to their heels with Mr Cumming's reserve rifle, at the very instant when that implement of destruction was most pressingly required. In their meditative hours they were sure to be found smoking their pipes close to the powder magazine; and in other respects their habits were decidedly more curious than agreeable. With this cortege did Mr Gordon Cumming, equipped in his native kilt, and bearing on his shoulder a double-

barrelled rifle—the handiwork of that excellent artist, Dickson of Edinburgh, which our author pronounces to be the most perfect and useful weapon he had ever the pleasure of using—set forth on his arduous quest.

His adventures before reaching Colesberg, the last of the military stations, are inferior in interest to what follows. The country through which he passed was occupied by Boers of the genuine Dutch breed, who, though not especially well-affected to the English, held out the right hand of fellowship to the “berg-Scot,” or Highlander, whose philabeg was a phenomenon in their eyes. In this neighbourhood, and at the establishments of Mynheers Stinkum and Sweirs, Mr Cumming enjoyed capital sport with springboks, wildebeests, ostriches, and the other more common kinds of African game. On one occasion he made a sad mistake, by pursuing in the dark what he supposed to be a herd of quaggas, and bringing down a couple which turned out to be the team-horses of some neighbouring Boer. We have known, ere now, a stot brought down instead of a stag, on a cloudy night, when the sportsman was watching in the corn—a circumstance which our sporting friends will do well to bear in mind during their annual excursions to the hills. Notwithstanding the late depreciation of cattle, stot will be found expensive when appraised at the owner’s valuation.

Quitting Colesberg, Mr Cumming continued his route northwards, halting occasionally by some Vley, or pool of water, which in that arid region is the sure haunt of game. The following is a description of one of his encampments.

“In the cool of the evening I inspanned, and, having proceeded about four miles through an extremely wild and desolate-looking country, on clearing a nick in a range of low rocky hills, I came full in view of the vley or pool of water beside which I had been directed to encamp. The breadth of this vley was about three hundred yards. One side of it was grassy, and patronised by several flocks of Egyptian wild geese, a species of barnacle, wild ducks, egrets, and cranes. The other side was bare, and here the game drank; and the margin of the water was trampled by the feet of wild animals like an English horsepond. There being no trees

beside which to form our camp, we drew up our waggons among some low bushes, about four hundred yards from the vley.”

At this spot Mr Cumming remained until the pool dried up, occupying himself chiefly in the chase of the oryx or gemsbok. This animal he describes as nearly the most beautiful and remarkable of all the antelope tribe. It is the animal which is supposed to have given rise to the fable of the unicorn, as its long straight horns, when seen in profile, so exactly cover one another as to give it the appearance of having but one. An epicure would not have despised a lodging by that little African pool. “We lived well,” says our author, “but lonely. My camp abounded with every delicacy—tongues, brains, marrow bones, kidneys, rich soup, with the most delicious venison in the world, &c., and a constant supply of ostrich eggs.” No wonder that Carollus, Cobus, and Co. were loath to leave such a paradise of unlimited provender!

All things, however, have an end. The vley at last sank into the earth and disappeared—the water having been for some time previously so brackish as to affect the health of the camp. Before starting for a new station, Mr Cumming had the good fortune to behold one of those extraordinary spectacles which can only be witnessed in lands where man is but a casual visitor.

“On the 28th I had the satisfaction of beholding, for the first time, what I had often heard the Boers allude to—viz., a ‘trek-bokken,’ or grand migration of springboks. This was, I think, the most extraordinary and striking scene, as connected with beasts of the chase, that I have ever beheld. For about two hours before the day dawned I had been lying awake in my waggon, listening to the grunting of the bucks within two hundred yards of me, imagining that some large herd of springboks was feeding beside my camp; but on my rising when it was clear, and looking about me, I beheld the ground to the northward of my camp actually covered with a dense living mass of springboks marching slowly and steadily along, extending from an opening in a long range of hills to the west, through which they continued pouring, like the flood of some great river, to a ridge about a mile to the north-east, over which they disappeared. The breadth of the ground they covered might have been

somewhere about half a mile. I stood upon the fore chest of my waggon for nearly two hours, lost in wonder at the novel and wonderful scene which was passing before me, and had some difficulty in convincing myself that it was reality which I beheld, and not the wild and exaggerated picture of a hunter's dream. During this time their vast legions continued streaming through the neck of the hills in one unbroken compact phalanx."

This, however, was merely a partial view of these enormous herds, which give so grand an idea of the boundless prodigality of nature in the southern clime. On the same day our author obtained a better sight of the multitude.

"Having inspanned, we proceeded with the waggons to take up the fallen game, which being accomplished, we held for the small periodical stream beside which the wandering Boers were encamped—that point being in my line of march for Beer Vley. Vast and surprising as was the herd of springboks which I had that morning witnessed, it was infinitely surpassed by what I beheld on the march from my Vley to old Sweirs' camp; for, on our clearing the low range of hills through which the springboks had been pouring, I beheld the boundless plains, and even the hill-sides, which stretched away on every side of me, thickly covered, not with herds, but with one vast herd of springboks: far as the eye could stream the landscape was alive with them, until they softened down into a dim red mass of living creatures.

"To endeavour to form any idea of the amount of antelopes which I that day beheld, were vain; but I have, nevertheless, no hesitation in stating that some hundreds of thousands of springboks were that morning within the compass of my vision. On reaching the encampment of the Boers I outspanned, and set about cutting up and salting my venison: the Boers had likewise been out with their 'roers,' and shot as many as they could carry home. Old Sweirs acknowledged that it was a very fair 'trek-bokken,' but observed that it was not many when compared with what he had seen. 'You this morning,' he remarked, 'behold only one flat covered with springboks; but I give you my word that I have ridden a long day's journey over a succession of flats covered with them, as far as I could see, as thick as sheep standing in a fold.' I spent the following two days with the Boers. Each morning and evening we rode out and

hunted the springboks, killing as many as we could bring home. The vast armies of springboks did not, however, tarry long in that neighbourhood—having quickly consumed every green herb, they passed away to give other districts a benefit, thus leaving the Boers no alternative but to strike their tents, and remove with their flocks and herds to lands where they might find pasture."

Shortly afterwards, Mr Cumming crossed the Orange River into the territory of the Griquas, having picked up on the way a juvenile Bushboy, who has since remained as his henchman. As usual, he was fortunate in his sport, and succeeded in obtaining rare and valuable specimens for his collection, which had become so large that he found it necessary to return to Colesberg and deposit it there, before attempting to penetrate further in the country of elephants. Moreover, the district was then in a very unsettled state, the Boers and Griquas being at open war, and armed parties traversing the country. Before returning, however, he had the satisfaction not only of hearing the roar of the lion, but of knocking over a remarkably fine lioness, after a desperate encounter, in which his horse was cruelly wounded. His favourite method of shooting was rather remarkable. Near some pool or fountain he was wont to dig a hole, in which he ensconced himself at sunset, ready to discharge his bullets at any of the animals which he might fancy, as they approached the water. This system he prosecuted afterwards with great success; but in one of his first attempts was somewhat disagreeably surprised. He had just shot an antelope and a hyena from his hiding, and had lain down without taking the precaution of reloading his rifle.

"I had not slept long when my light dreams were influenced by strange sounds. I dreamt that lions were rushing about in quest of me; and, the sounds increasing, I awoke with a sudden start, uttering a loud shriek. I could not for several seconds remember in what part of the world I was, or anything connected with my present position. I heard the rushing of light feet, as of a pack of wolves, close on every side of me, accompanied by the most unearthly sounds. On raising my head, to my utter horror I saw on every side nothing but wild dogs chattering and growling. On my

right and on my left, and within a few paces of me, stood two lines of these ferocious-looking animals, cocking their ears and stretching their necks to have a look at me ; while two large troops, in which there were at least forty of them, kept dashing backwards and forwards across my wind within a few yards of me, chattering and growling with the most extraordinary volubility. Another troop of wild dogs were fighting over the wildebeest I had shot, which they had begun to devour. On beholding them I expected no other fate than to be instantly torn to pieces and consumed. I felt my blood curdling along my cheeks, and my hair bristling on my head. However, I had presence of mind to consider that the human voice and a determined bearing might overawe them ; and accordingly, springing to my feet I stepped on to the little ledge surrounding the hole, where, drawing myself up to my full height, I waved my large blanket with both hands, at the same time addressing my savage assembly in a loud and solemn manner. This had the desired effect : the wild dogs removed to a more respectful distance, barking at me something like collics. Upon this I snatched up my rifle and commenced loading ; and before this was accomplished the entire pack had passed away and did not return."

We regret that Mr. Cumming has not given us an accurate report of the speech which he delivered on this momentous occasion, as it might, in case of necessity, prove as efficacious as one of the charmed rings of St. Hubert. There can be no doubt that even the most ferocious of the lower animals entertain an instinctive dread of man ; and many instances might be related in which an undaunted bearing and a steady eye have diverted a meditated attack. Nevertheless we counsel no one to undertake the part of Van Amburgh without urgent necessity. A bull may prove an ugly customer ; and it is always advisable, if a wall be at hand, to put that betwixt yourself and the irritated father of the herd. We would rather be excused from attempting to stare a strange mastiff out of countenance ; neither shall we ever undertake to fascinate or magnetise a rattlesnake. As to speechification, in such cases, we doubt whether we should find ourselves quite up to the mark of eloquence ; and, to say the truth, Mr. Cumming's periods, in moments of imminent peril, appear to

have been rather terse than Ciceronian. Though he has not favoured us with his harangue to the wild dogs, we find him on another occasion engaged in an animated conversation with a lioness.

"Ruyter came towards me, and I ran forward to obtain a view beyond a slight rise in the ground, to see whether the lionesses had gone. In so doing I came suddenly upon them, within about seventy yards : they were standing looking back at Ruyter. I then very rashly commenced making a rapid stalk in upon them, and fired at the nearest, having only one shot in my rifle. The ball told loudly ; and the lioness at which I had fired wheeled right round, and came on lashing her tail, showing her teeth, and making that horrid murderous deep growl which an angry lion generally utters. At the same moment her comrade, who seemed better to know that she was in the presence of man, made a hasty retreat into the reeds. The instant the lioness came on I stood up to my full height, holding my rifle and my arms extended, and high above my head. This checked her in her course ; but on looking round and missing her comrade, and observing Ruyter slowly advancing, she was still more exasperated ; and, fancying that she was being surrounded, she made another forward movement, growling terribly. This was a moment of great danger. I felt that my only chance of safety was extreme steadiness ; so, standing motionless as a rock, with my eyes firmly fixed upon her, I called out in a clear commanding voice, "Holloa ! old girl, what's the hurry ? take it easy ; holloa ! holloa !" She instantly once more halted, and seemed perplexed, looking round for her comrade. I then thought it prudent to beat a retreat, which I very slowly did, talking to the lioness all the time. She seemed undecided as to her future movements, and was gazing after me and snuffing the ground when I last beheld her !"

We believe most of our readers will agree with us in opinion, that Mr. Cumming has great reason to be thankful for this narrow escape, notwithstanding the strength of his nerves, and his more than gladiatorial courage.

The second expedition from Colesberg was more exciting than the first. He now penetrated the Bechuana country, of which he gives us an interesting account. Not the least

pleasing of his sketches is the description of Kuruman, which conveys an impression of the quiet progress of civilisation in these remote regions, for which we were hardly prepared. We have much pleasure in extracting this passage; because we consider it a most valuable testimony, by an unprejudiced eyewitness, of the good which has been effected by means of a truly Christian Society, whose labours have often been undervalued or misrepresented by sectarian jealousy:—

“ On the following day we reached Kuruman, or New Litakoo, a lovely green spot in the wilderness, strongly contrasting with the sterile and inhospitable regions by which it is surrounded. I was here kindly welcomed and hospitably entertained by Mr Moffat and Mr Hamilton, both missionaries of the London Society, and also by Mr Hume, an old trader, long resident at Kuruman. The gardens at Kuruman are extensive, and extremely fertile. Besides corn and vegetables, they contained a great variety of fruits, amongst which were vines, peach trees, nectarines, apple, orange, and lemon trees, all of which, in their seasons, bear a profusion of most delicious fruit. These gardens are irrigated with the most liberal supply of water from a powerful fountain which gushes forth, at once forming a little river, from a subterraneous cave, which has several low narrow mouths, but within is lofty and extensive. This cave is stated by the natives to extend to a very great distance under ground. The natives about Kuruman and the surrounding districts generally embrace the Christian religion. Mr Moffat kindly showed me through his printing establishment, church, and school-rooms, which were lofty and well built, and altogether on a scale which would not have disgraced one of the towns of the more enlightened colony. It was Mr Moffat who reduced the Bechuana language to writing and printing; since which he has printed thousands of Sechuana Testaments, as also tracts and hymns, which were now eagerly purchased by the converted natives. Mr Moffat is a person admirably calculated to excel in his important calling. Together with a noble and athletic frame, he possesses a face on which forbearance and Christian charity are very plainly written, and his mental and bodily attainments are great. Minister, gardener, blacksmith, gunsmith, mason, carpenter, glazier—every hour of

the day finds this worthy pastor engaged in some useful employment—setting, by his own exemplary piety and industrious habits, a good example to others to go and do likewise.”

Many miles to the north of Kuruman, at a place called Bakatla, there is yet another missionary station, occupied by a Dr Livingstone, for whose kindness and advice Mr Cumming acknowledges himself indebted. Still the land of promise lay onwards. A dreary distance of two hundred miles, over rugged and apparently impassable mountain ranges, extensive sandy forests, which are destitute of water, and vast and trackless forests, lay between Bakatla and Bamangwato, the grand district of the elephants; and the interpreter and guides who had been hired for the expedition did their utmost to dissuade Mr Cumming from advancing, by drawing frightful pictures of the difficulties of the way. He was also exposed to another annoyance, which threw on him an additional burden. The Bechuanas are extremely fond of flesh, which they consider the only food befitting man. Corn and milk they reckon the food of women. Having no flesh at home, and being seldom able to kill large game for themselves, they entertain great respect for those who kill plenty of venison for them, and they will travel to very great distances for the purpose of obtaining it. Hence Mr Cumming found himself transformed into a South African chief, with a ready-made clan following at his heels, all blessed with a splendid digestion, clamorous for animal food, and regarding him as their legitimate purveyor. Many a weary hour was he forced to pass in the saddle, in order to satisfy the appetites of these carnivorous attendants. Fortunately they were not very particular as to quality, for they would sit down with satisfaction to a meal of rhinoceros or crocodile, when the more delicate treat of eland steaks or buffalo hump was awaiting. If it be Christian charity to feed the hungry, Mr Cumming can give an irresistible answer to those who have accused him of a too wanton and untempered passion for the chase.

On his way to Bamangwato, Mr Cumming fell in with various new

species of antelope and buffaloes, against which he levelled his Dickson with remarkable success. Also he formed his first acquaintance with the rhinoceros, an animal which he respected at first—and no wonder, as all must acknowledge who have seen that ponderous and formidable monster—but which he subsequently held so cheap as to stone it away on occasion, when its impertinent curiosity interfered with his designs upon nobler game! This may be good fun for those who have practised it, but we should infinitely prefer having a shy at some object less perilous than a brute weighing above a ton, with a horn three feet long upon its snout, and not endowed by nature with the most placable or timorous disposition. Lions also appeared, and were accounted for by our indefatigable sportsman. We give the following graphic description of the scenery on his route:—

“About mid-day we inspanned, and trekked on till sundown through a country the most wild and primitive that can be conceived. On gaining the neck of the mountain-pass, our march for a few miles wound round beautifully wooded grassy hills, after which we descended into a rugged and densely wooded valley, intersected with deep water-courses, which threatened momentarily the destruction of my axle-trees. So dense was the jungle that we were obliged repeatedly to halt the waggons, and cut out a pathway with our axes before they could advance. Emerging from this valley, we entered upon a more level country, still, however, densely covered with forest trees and bushes in endless variety. Here water was very abundant. We crossed several streams and marshes, whose margins were a mass of the spoor of wild animals; that of rhinoceros, buffalo, and cameleopard being most abundant. At one stream the fresh spoor of a troop of lions was deeply imprinted in the wet sand.

“Although I am now acquainted with the native names of a number of the trees of the African forests, yet of their scientific names I am utterly ignorant. The shoulders and upper ridges of the mountains throughout all that country are profusely adorned with the graceful sandal-wood tree, famed on account of the delicious perfume of its timber. The leaf of this tree emits, at every season of the year, a powerful and fragrant perfume, which is increased by bruising the

leaves in the hand. Its leaf is small, of a light silvery gray colour, which is strongly contrasted by the dark and dense evergreen foliage of the moopooroo-tree, which also adorns the upper ranges of the mountain ridges. This beautiful tree is interesting, as producing the most delicious and serviceable fruit I have met with throughout these distant parts; the poorer natives subsisting upon it for several months during which it continues in season. The moopooroo is of the size and shape of a very large olive. It is at first green; but gradually ripening, like the Indian mango, it becomes beautifully striped with yellow, and when perfectly ripe, its colour is the deepest orange. The fruit is sweet and mealy, similar to the date, and contains a small brown seed. It covers the branches, and, when ripe, the golden fruit beautifully contrasts with the dark-green leaves of the tree which bears it. Besides the moopooroo, a great variety of fruits are met with throughout these mountains and forests, all of which are known to and gathered by the natives. I must, however, forego a description of them, as it would swell these pages to undue bounds. Throughout the densely wooded dells and hollows of the mountains, the rosewood-tree occurs, of considerable size, and in great abundance.”

Here our enterprising traveller first encountered the cameleopard, that stately creature whose beauty and innocence should exempt it from the indiscriminate attack of the hunter. Mr Cumming seems to have felt this; for, notwithstanding the intense excitement which he experienced in riding amidst a troop of gigantic giraffes, it would appear that, after securing one or two specimens, he left them for the future unmolested. These rides through the forest and jungle were productive of serious inconvenience. The woods are filled with a kind of thorn, facetiously called the wait-a-bit, the prickles of which, in shape, sharpness, and strength, bear a striking resemblance to fish-hooks. Considering that Mr Cumming usually rode bare-armed, and in the kilt, it will surprise no one to learn that his epidermis was occasionally ruffled, and our only astonishment is, that he should have persisted so long in adhering to his primitive costume. He fairly confesses the inconvenience, telling us that “the greater part of this chase led through bushes of the

wait-a-bit thorn of the most virulent description, which covered my legs and arms with blood long before I had killed the giraffe. I rode, as usual, in the kilt, with my arms bare to my shoulder. It was Chapelpark of Badenoch's old gray kilt, but in this chase it received a deathblow, from which it never afterwards recovered."

At Booby, a Bechuana kraal, Mr Cumming was the unconscious instrument of effecting a change of dynasty. The chief, who possibly followed the northern fashion of identifying his own name with that of his estate, and who, at all events, was entitled to be known as Booby of that Ilk, had driven a little trade with Mr Cumming. Unfortunately, however, he was not judicious in the selection of commodities, as the following anecdote will show:—

"During my visit to Booby, I obtained from the natives some interesting specimens of native arms and other curiosities, for which they required gunpowder, their chief having in his possession one or two muskets. When the chief and his men proceeded to use my powder, they missed all they fired at; the Bechuana mode of firing being to withdraw the face from the gun, from a natural impulse of fear, before drawing the trigger, and to look back over the left shoulder instead of at the animal they expect to kill. The cause of their missing they at once ascribed to the powder, which they affirmed required medicine. Accordingly, the chief and all the long-headed men in Booby assembled in the forum; and, having placed the unworthy gunpowder upon a large kaross, they all sat round it, and commenced a variety of ceremonies and incantations, with a view of imparting to it that power which they considered it had lost. At length some wiseacre among the soothsayers informed the king that the presence of fire was indispensable on the occasion. Fire was accordingly introduced along with the other medicines, and a censer of hot embers was passed frequently over the powder. Suddenly, however, an unlucky spark sprung from the censer into the heap of powder, which, of course, instantly exploded, and, the quantity being very considerable, the Booby men and their chief were blown heels over head on every side—several of the party, and among others the chief, being so severely burned, that they shortly died. So much for Bechuana medicine."

The Bechuanas seem to be an inoffensive but not altogether honest

race. Mr Cumming was far too successful a hunter to be permitted to depart easily, as his disappearance, along with his rifle, would manifestly tend to the grievous detriment of their flesh-pots. Accordingly they left no stratagem untried to prevent him from proceeding further; but they had a wary and resolute man to deal with, and the possession of a compass effectually baffled their repeated attempts to mislead him. At length, after a toilsome journey and severe suffering from scarcity of water, the dark blue mountains of Bamangwato loomed upon the horizon. Mr Cumming is probably the first European who has ever penetrated so far, but in these days of commercial enterprise we may calculate with confidence that he will not be the last. The news of his coming was speedily bruited abroad, and obtained him a gracious invitation to the court of Sicomu, whose sceptred rule the Bakalahari tribes obey. This monarch's treasury was particularly rich in ivory, there having been for several years an increasing accumulation of tusks. These he was willing to dispose of, but at exorbitant rates, demanding, with a degree of effrontery which is almost incredible, a musket in exchange for two tusks of the bull elephant. Well might Mr Cumming feel indignant at the rapacity of this Shylock of a savage! Each case of muskets, containing twenty, had cost him £16, "whereas the value of the ivory I required for each musket was upwards of £30, being about 3000 per cent, which, I am informed, is reckoned among mercantile men to be a very fair profit." Opinions differ; our decided impression being, that Mr Cumming was victimised by the autocrat.

Mr Cumming, however, shortly wearied of the monotonous business of barter, and determined to look out for ivory in person. We pass over the very interesting narrative of his first encounter with a female elephant, in the course of which he received a warning of the danger inseparable from the pursuit of the most powerful of living animals. We prefer extracting the graphic account of his earliest victory over a patriarchal bull:—

"In a few minutes one of those who

had gone off to our left came running breathless to say that he had seen the mighty game. I halted for a minute, and instructed Isaac, who carried the big Dutch rifle, to act independently of me, while Kleinboy was to assist me in the chase; but, as usual, when the row began, my followers thought only of number one. I bared my arms to the shoulder, and, having imbibed a draught of *aqua pura* from the calabash of one of the spoorers, I grasped my trusty two-grooved rifle, and told my guide to go a-head. We proceeded silently as might be for a few hundred yards, following the guide, when he suddenly pointed, exclaiming "Klow!" and before us stood a herd of mighty bull elephants, packed together beneath a shady grove about a hundred and fifty yards in advance. I rode slowly towards them; and as soon as they observed me, they made a loud rumbling noise, and, tossing their trunks, wheeled right about, and made off in one direction, crushing through the forest, and leaving a cloud of dust behind them. I was accompanied by a detachment of my dogs, who assisted me in the pursuit.

"The distance I had come, and the difficulties I had undergone to behold these elephants, rose fresh before me. I determined that, on this occasion at least, I would do my duty, and, dashing my spurs into Sunday's ribs, I was very soon much too close in their rear for safety. The elephants now made an inclination to my left, whereby I obtained a good view of the ivory. The herd consisted of six bulls: four of them were full-grown first-rate elephants; the other two were fine fellows, but had not yet arrived at mature stature. Of the four old fellows, two had much finer tusks than the rest, and for a few seconds I was undecided which of these two I would follow; when, suddenly, the one which I fancied had the stoutest tusks broke from his comrades, and I at once felt convinced that he was the patriarch of the herd, and followed him accordingly. Canterng alongside, I was about to fire, when he instantly turned, and, uttering a trumpet so strong and shrill that the earth seemed to vibrate beneath my feet, he charged furiously after me for several hundred yards in a direct line, not altering his course in the slightest degree for the trees of the forest, which he snapped and overthrew like reeds in his headlong career.

"When he pulled up in his charge I likewise halted, and as he slowly turned to retreat I let fly at his shoulder, Sunday capering and prancing, and giving me much trouble. On receiving the ball the

elephant shrugged his shoulder, and made off at a free majestic walk. This shot brought several of the dogs to my assistance, which had been following the other elephants; and on their coming up and barking, another headlong charge was the result, accompanied by the never-failing trumpet as before. In his charge he passed close to me, when I saluted him with a second bullet in the shoulder, of which he did not take the slightest notice. I now determined not to fire again until I could make a steady shot; but although the elephant turned repeatedly, Sunday invariably disappointed me, capering so that it was impossible to fire. At length exasperated, I became reckless of the danger, and, springing from the saddle, I approached the elephant under cover of a tree, and gave him a bullet in the side of his head, when trumpeting so shrilly that the forest trembled, he charged among the dogs, from whom he seemed to fancy that the blow had come; after which he took up a position in a grove of thorns, with his head towards me. I walked up very near, and, as he was in the act of charging, I (being in those days under wrong impressions as to the impracticability of bringing down an elephant with a shot in the forehead) stood coolly in his path until he was within fifteen paces of me, and let drive at the hollow of his forehead, in the vain expectation that by so doing I should end his career. The shot only served to increase his fury—an effect which, I had remarked, shots in the head invariably produced; and, continuing his charge with incredible quickness and impetuosity, he all but terminated my elephant-hunting for ever. A large party of the Bechuanas, who had come up, yelled out instantaneously, imagining I was killed, for the elephant was at one moment almost on the top of me: I however escaped by my activity, and by dodging round the bushy trees. As the elephant was charging, an enormous thorn ran deep into the sole of my foot—the old Badenoch brogues, which I that day sported, being worn through; and this caused me severe pain, laming me throughout the rest of the conflict.

"The elephant held on through the forest at a sweeping pace; but he was hardly out of sight when I was loaded and in the saddle, and soon once more alongside. About this time I heard Isaac blazing away at another bull; but when the elephant charged, his cowardly heart failed him, and he very soon made his appearance at a safe distance in my rear. My elephant kept crashing along at a steady pace, with blood streaming from

his wounds; the dogs, which were knocked up with fatigue and thirst, no longer barked around him, but had dropped astern. It was long before I again fired, for I was afraid to dismount, and Sunday was extremely troublesome. At length I fired sharp right and left from the saddle: he got both balls behind the shoulder, and made a long charge after me, rumbling and trumpeting as before. The whole body of the Bamangwato men had now come up, and were following a short distance behind me. Among these was Mollyeon, who volunteered to help; and being a very swift and active fellow, he rendered me important service by holding my fidgetty horse's head while I fired and loaded. I then fired six broadsides from the saddle, the elephant charging almost every time, and pursuing us back to the main body in our rear, who fled in all directions as he approached.

"The sun had now sunk behind the tops of the trees; it would soon be very dark, and the elephant did not seem much distressed, notwithstanding all he had received. I recollected that my time was short, therefore at once resolved to fire no more from the saddle, but to go close up to him and fire on foot. Riding up to him, I dismounted, and, approaching very near, I gave it him right and left in the side of the head, upon which he made a long and determined charge after me; but I was now very reckless of his charges, for I saw that he could not overtake me; and in a twinkling I was loaded, and, again approaching, I fired sharp right and left behind his shoulder. Again he charged with a terrific trumpet, which sent Sunday flying through the forest. This was his last charge. The wounds which he had received began to tell on his constitution, and he now stood at bay beside a thorny tree, with the dogs barking around him. These, refreshed by the evening breeze, and perceiving that it was nearly over with the elephant, had once more come to my assistance. Having loaded, I drew near, and fired right and left at his forehead. On receiving these shots, instead of charging, he tossed his trunk up and down, and by various sounds and motions, most gratifying to the hungry natives, evinced that his demise was near. Again I loaded, and fired my last shot behind his shoulder; on receiving it, he turned round the bushy tree beside which he stood, and I ran round to give him the other barrel, but the mighty old monarch of the forest needed no more; before I could clear the bushy tree he fell heavily on his side, and his spirit had fled. My feelings at this moment can only be un-

derstood by a few brother Nimrods, who have had the good fortune to enjoy a similar encounter. I never felt so gratified on any former occasion as I did then."

We need hardly say that the fall of the elephant was greeted by the Bechuanas with their most approved substitute for cheering. At an early hour next morning they were at work upon the carcase with their assagais, leaving little reversion for the maws of the expectant vultures. We admire the sentiments contained in a note, which ought to be seriously considered by those who, with maudlin sensibility, or rather an affectation of it, dispute the right of any man to enter into a regular campaign against the wild beasts of the forest or the desert. It is of course absurd to enter into any discussion upon a point which resolves itself into a primary law of nature; nevertheless, in our days, there are critics possessed of such tender and exquisite feelings, that, even while munching their cheese, and engulfing at each mouthful myriads of unoffending mites, they must needs declaim upon the horrid inhumanity of shooting down a wild elephant. They expatiate upon the pain which the animal must have endured from its several wounds, and denounce the ferocity of the huntsman who could be savage enough to maintain so protracted a contest. Now as to pain they are obviously right. Every mutton-chop and kidney which is devoured throughout wide Christendom, must be purchased at the expense of a certain amount of pain; and yet nobody in his senses has ever ventured to maintain, on that account, that it is an act of barbarity to curtail the existence of a sheep. Is it Mr Cumming's fault that an elephant will carry some twenty shots before he drops? Do these benevolent gentlemen suppose that the excitement of being chased by a charging elephant is so great, that the sportsman willingly lingers over his work? Or do they mean to say that the finer feelings generated by civilisation, ought to deter every one from taking the life of a meaner animal? If so, great joy be to the bugs, and a jubilee for the lesser vermin! It is somewhat curious, as we once had occasion to show, that the very men who are the

strongest opponents of field-sports, are at the same time the most determined advocates of extermination. They wish to abolish the process of killing, by the more summary one of sweeping from the face of the earth whole races of animated beings. They would rather that the hills were utterly devoid of grouse and deer, than that any individual should be tempted to the enormity of shooting one of these, either for his pastime or his appetite. If this is not a warring against nature, we know not what is. Ivory is a marketable commodity, tolerably well known and esteemed in the fine arts; and it is just possible that some of our amiable objectors have applied to the dentist for artificial grinders, which had their pristine growth in the jaws of the hippopotamus. Is there anything unlawful, or abhorrent to the finer feelings of humanity, in the attempt of Mr Cumming to benefit himself by supplying the market with these commodities? If so, henceforward let whales go free without any hazard of the harpoon; let the *Phoca* congregate unmolested upon our shores; let tallow be abolished, cod-liver oil unknown, and leather put entirely under ban.

For our part, so far are we from joining in any such condemnation, that we firmly believe Mr Cumming's visit to these remote regions, forms the brightest spot in the memory of many a poor human being, but too often exposed to the pangs of extreme deprivation; and we regard him as one of those who have done good service to the cause of civilisation, by offering themselves as its pioneers. The following is his own sentiment:—

“It was ever to me a source of great pleasure to reflect that, while enriching myself in following my favourite pursuit of elephant-hunting, I was feeding and making happy the starving families of hundreds of the Bechuana and Bakalahari tribes, who invariably followed my waggons, and assisted me in my hunting, in numbers varying from fifty to two hundred at a time. These men were often accompanied by their wives and families; and when an elephant, hippopotamus, or other large animal was slain, all hands repaired to the spot, when every inch of the animal was reduced to biltongue, viz. cut into very narrow strips,

and hung in festoons upon poles, and dried in the sun.”

But enough of this digression. In a country where there are no chop-houses, and where pints of beer are unattainable, every man must shift for himself in the best possible manner; and we presume it will hardly be maintained that the range of discovery is to be narrowed, and a huge portion of the globe left unexplored, merely out of deference to the delicate feelings of certain journalists, who would be sorely puzzled to distinguish between the butt-end and the muzzle of a rifle.

We shall not accompany Mr Cumming farther in his pursuit of elephants, leaving the interesting chapters relative to this noblest kind of chase for the gratification of our readers, to whom we cordially recommend the perusal of these volumes. Once and again he fell back upon the colony to deposit his sylvan spoils, refit, and replenish his exhausted stores, and then resolutely returned to the far hunting-grounds in quest of new adventure. It is this indomitable spirit of enterprise which lends his book its greatest charm, and which distinguishes it from any other of the same class which we have hitherto met with. The moment that Mr Cumming left the colony, he seems to have dismissed from his mind the whole of the cares, curiosities, and anxious thoughts of civilisation. Once in the desert, he never appears to have looked beyond it. It mattered not to him what was the progress of events in the other hemisphere—who was Minister—what party was in or what party out—we even venture to avow our conviction that he cared not to consult a Bechuana conjuror whether Lord John Russell was still in the land of the living. Seated at his breakfast of ostrich egg and sliced elephant trunk, he required no perusal of the *Times* to give zest to his daily meal; and if ever he sighed for the possession of controversial pamphlets, it must have been upon occasion when wadding was particularly scarce. In short, he went about his work in the best possible frame of mind, eschewing all distractions as unfavourable to the accuracy of his aim, and occupying himself entirely, as a hunter should, with his quarry.

It is just possible that some sceptical people, whose acquaintance with savage nature is derived solely from an occasional visit to a menagerie, may venture to insinuate that some of Mr Cumming's pictures bear the appearance of over-colouring. He need not be surprised at this. From the time of Bruce to that of Humboldt, such hints have been occasionally thrown out; and, indeed, we presume that every home sportsman has had experience of similar unbelievers. For our own part we grieve to say, that want of faith as well as reverence has been frequently testified by audiences during the detail of our own exploits. Should it happen that we have made a better bag, or killed a larger fish than usual, our simple statement of these facts, made in the most unvaunting and straight-forward manner, is too often accompanied by a running commentary of facetious winks and suppressed coughs, the import of which we divine, whilst we treat them with consummate scorn. Our comfort is, that such marks of incredulity invariably proceed from blockheads utterly unversed in the mysteries either of wood or water craft; for it seems to be a general rule, that men are most disposed to be critical upon those subjects of which, in reality, they know the least. More fortunate than many other travellers, Mr Cumming has his trophies to show; but, even were it otherwise, what right, we ask, has a Cockney to challenge the authenticity of the feats of a strong and adventurous young man, who for five long years was a wanderer in the African wilderness? That Mr Cumming acquired—for his narrative shows that it was so—greater firmness of nerve, coolness, and experience than he possessed before, in consequence of his numerous encounters with the most formidable of savage creatures, is nothing more than the result of practice when added to native intrepidity: and what he tells us in these volumes is another proof of the exaggeration which has long prevailed as to the courage, if not the ferocity, even of the king of beasts. That the tiger is at best a cowardly animal has often been asserted by the most skilful hunters of Hindostan. Mr Cumming does not stigmatise the

lion with want of absolute courage; but he shows that a well-armed man, properly equipped and supported, need not shrink from the contest, provided he has that firmness and self-possession which are indispensable for success in every kind of combat. We advise no one who is liable to sudden panics, or to impulses of the *saure-qui-peut* description, to engage in this particular species of sport. A steady front is as indispensable as a steady aim; and woe betide the individual who, on such an occasion, betakes himself to his heels, and exposes his rear to the enemy! It is one thing to keep out of mischief, and another to bear yourself boldly when in for it. Here, as in other cases, it is the best policy to look danger broadly in the face. There may have been great rashness in some of Mr Cumming's exploits—though, in absence of all similar experience, we have not the presumption to say so—but we are bound to declare, that in no one instance can we perceive the slightest trace of exaggeration or undue colouring in his narrative.

True, his sport was of a kind most peculiar, and, so far as we know, never equalled in success. But then, where do we find an instance of another man devoting himself to that pursuit with so much ardour and energy, and with such excellent previous training, in a country similarly favoured? Accounts, indeed, have reached us from Ceylon of elephant shooting nearly as successful as that described by Mr Cumming; but that magnificent island does not afford the same variety in the chase which distinguishes Southern Africa. From the most ancient times, Africa has ranked pre-eminent for the marvellous abundance of its animals. From that country came the uncouth creatures, so strangely figured on antique coins, which adorned the consular and imperial shows of Rome; and throughout the Middle Ages, it was referred to as the nursery of monsters, long since extinct, to the imagination of all who have not received their education in the College of Heralds. Even yet there is ample scope for fancy. Such a vast tract of Central Africa lies unexplored, that we know not what wondrous stores of new physical

knowledge are still bound up, and concealed from the eye of science; nor is it altogether impossible that ancient fable may hereafter be recognised as truth. But with such speculations as these we have at present little concern. Deeply as Mr Cumming has penetrated into the southern wilds of that great and mysterious continent, he yet only occupies the margin of a field of new discovery. But, so far, he has done good service to the cause of natural history. What heretofore was obscure, he has made plain; and that not by cursory observation, but by great and assiduous labour, such as few men could have undertaken, even supposing that the energy and the will could have been found combined in these few. And, therefore, we think that these African sketches of his will possess a more lasting value than can be attached to most works professing to treat of the noble science of the chase. They differ altogether from the usual dry details of the naturalists, who, in nine cases out of ten, were compelled to give the legends which they heard from natives, instead of narrating the results of their own practical experience. Few naturalists are devoted and accomplished sportsmen. Mr Cumming may not be, in the strict academical sense of the word, an accomplished naturalist, but he has brought back material enough for a dozen zoologists to study.

Let us now take a moonlight picture. "Watching the water" in Africa, is somewhat different from the process of "burning the water" in Scotland; but it is a very deadly method of securing game. All night the desert is astir. The wild beasts rouse themselves from their lairs, and forsake their fastnesses to prowl about in search of prey, and afterwards to slake their thirst in the cool waters of the fountain. Near the margin of one of these Mr Cumming had excavated his ambuscade.

"On the afternoon of the 4th, I deepened my hole, and watched the water. As the sun went down, two graceful springboks and a herd of pallah came and drank, when I shot the best pallah in the troop. At night I watched the water with Kleinboy: very soon a cow black rhinoceros came and drank, and got off for the

present with two balls in her. A little afterwards, two black rhinoceroses and two white ones came to the water-side. We both fired together at the finest of the two black rhinoceroses; she ran three hundred yards and fell dead. Soon after this the other black rhinoceros came up again, and stood at the water-side; I gave her one ball upon the shoulder; she ran a hundred yards and fell dead. In half-an-hour a third old borèlé appeared, and, having inspected the two dead ones, he came up to the water-side. We fired together; he ran two hundred yards, and fell dead. I felt satisfied with our success, and gave it up for the night.

"By the following evening the natives had cleared away the greater part of two of the rhinoceroses which lay right in the way of the game approaching the water. I, however, enforced their leaving the third rhinoceros, which had fallen on the bare rising ground, almost opposite to my hiding-place, in the hope of attracting a lion, as I intended to watch the water at night. Soon after the twilight had died away, I went down to my hole with Kleinboy and two natives, who lay concealed in another hole, with Wolf and Boxer ready to slip, in the event of wounding a lion.

"On reaching the water, I looked towards the carcass of the rhinoceros, and, to my astonishment, I beheld the ground alive with large creatures, as though a troop of zebras were approaching the fountain to drink. Kleinboy remarked to me that a troop of zebras were standing on the height. I answered, "Yes;" but I knew very well that zebras would not be capering around the carcass of a rhinoceros. I quickly arranged my blankets, pillow, and guns in the hole, and then lay down to feast my eyes on the interesting sight before me. It was bright moonlight, as clear as I need wish, and within one night of being full moon. There were six large lions, about twelve or fifteen hyenas, and from twenty to thirty jackals, feasting on and around the carcasses of the three rhinoceroses. The lions feasted peacefully, but the hyenas and jackals fought over every mouthful, and chased one another round and round the carcasses, growling, laughing, screeching, chattering, and howling without any intermission. The hyenas did not seem afraid of the lions, although they always gave way before them; for I observed that they followed them in the most disrespectful manner, and stood laughing, one or two on either side, when any lions came after their comrades to examine pieces of skin or bones which they were dragging away.

I had lain watching this banquet for about three hours, in the strong hope that, when the lions had feasted, they would come and drink. Two black and two white rhinoceroses had made their appearance, but, scared by the smell of the blood, they had made off.

“At length the lions seemed satisfied. They all walked about with their heads up, and seemed to be thinking about the water; and, in two minutes, one of them turned his face towards me, and came on; he was immediately followed by a second lion, and in half a minute by the remaining four. It was a decided and general move; they were all coming to drink right bang in my face, within fifteen yards of me.

“I charged the unfortunate, pale, and panting Kleinboy to convert himself into a stone; and knowing, from old spoor, exactly where they would drink, I cocked my left barrel, and placed myself and gun in position. The six lions came steadily on along the stony ridge, until within sixty yards of me, when they halted for a minute to reconnoitre. One of them stretched out his massive arms upon the rock, and lay down; the others then came on, and he rose and brought up the rear. They walked, as I had anticipated, to the old drinking-place, and three of them had put down their heads and were lapping the water loudly, when Kleinboy thought it necessary to shove up his ugly head. I turned my head slowly to rebuke him, and again turning to the lions I found myself discovered.

“An old lioness, who seemed to take the lead, had detected me, and with her head high, and her eyes fixed full upon me, she was coming slowly round the corner of the little vley, to cultivate further my acquaintance! This unfortunate coincidence put a stop at once to all further contemplation. I thought, in my haste, that it was perhaps most prudent to shoot this lioness, especially as none of the others had noticed me. I accordingly moved my arm, and covered her; she saw me move, and halted, exposing a full broadside. I fired; the ball entered one shoulder, and passed out behind the other. She bounded forward with repeated growls, and was followed by her five comrades, all enveloped in a cloud of dust; nor did they stop until they had reached the cover behind me, except one old gentleman, who halted and looked back for a few seconds, when I fired, but the ball went high. I listened anxiously for some sound to denote the approaching end of the lioness; nor listened in vain. I heard her growling and stationary, as if dying. In

one minute her comrade crossed the vley a little below me, and made towards the rhinoceros. I then slipped Wolf and Boxer on her scent, and, following them into the cover, I found her lying dead within twenty yards of where the old lion had lain two nights before. This was a fine old lioness, with perfect teeth, and was certainly a noble prize; but I felt dissatisfied at not having rather shot a lion, which I had most certainly done if my Hottentot had not destroyed my contemplation.”

We have said that a strong, intrepid, and well-armed man may consider himself a match for the lion; but there are times when even the bravest may be taken at disadvantage. It is an undoubted fact that the lion, having once tasted human flesh, loses that instinctive awe of man which every savage creature seems to feel in a greater or less degree, and becomes ravenous for the horrid banquet. Of this Mr Cumming's narrative affords us a melancholy instance. On one occasion, when they were encamped near a Bakalahari village, a monstrous lion, who had watched his opportunity, sprang upon one of the Hottentots, whilst lying by the fire, in the midst of his comrades, dragged him into the neighbouring bush, and deliberately devoured him. Next day Mr Cumming avenged his follower; but the recollection of this appalling sight haunted him for a long time afterwards, and contributed, more than sickness, to shake his nerves, and depress his adventurous spirit. At another time, our author was in great danger of a similar fate, his position being not less perilous than when he was exposed to the view of the wounded lioness. He had been shooting buffalo from a cover, by the side of a remote stream:—

“In a few minutes all the other buffaloes made off, and the sound of teeth tearing at the flesh was heard immediately.

“I fancied it was the hyenas, and fired a shot to scare them from the flesh. All was still; and being anxious to inspect the heads of the buffaloes, I went boldly forward, taking the native who accompanied me along with me. We were within about five yards of the nearest buffalo, when I observed a yellow mass lying

alongside of him, and at the same instant a lion gave a deep growl. I thought it was all over with me. The native shouted 'Tao,' and, springing away, instantly commenced blowing shrilly through a charmed piece of bone which he wore on his necklace. I retreated to the native, and we knelt down. The lion continued his meal, tearing away at the buffalo, and growling at his wife and family, whom I found, next day, by the spoor, had accompanied him. Knowing that he would not molest me, I left him alone. I proposed to the native to go to our hole and lie down, but he would not hear of it, and entreated me to fire at the lion. I fired three different shots where I thought I saw him, but without any effect; he would not so much as for a moment cease munching my buffalo. I then proceeded to lie down, and was soon asleep, the native keeping watch over our destinies. Some time after midnight other lions were heard coming on from other airts, and my old friend commenced roaring so loudly, that the native thought it proper to awake me.

"The first old lion now wanted to drink, and held right away for the two unfortunate steeds, roaring terribly. I felt rather alarmed for their safety, but, trusting that the lion had flesh enough for one night, I lay still, and listened with an attentive ear. In a few minutes, to my utter horror, I heard him spring upon one of the steeds with an angry growl, and dash him to the earth: the steed gave a slight groan, and all was still. I listened to hear the sound of teeth, but all continued still. Soon after this 'Tao' was once more to be heard munching the buffalo. In a few minutes he came forward and stood on the bank close above us, and roared most terribly,—walking up and down, as if meditating some mischief. I now thought it high time to make a fire, and, quickly collecting some dry reeds and little sticks, in half a minute we had a cheerful blaze. The lion, which had not yet got our wind, came forward at once to find out what the deuce was up; but, not seeing to his entire satisfaction from the top of the bank, he was proceeding to descend by a game

path into the river-bed, within a few yards of us. I happened at the very moment to go to this spot to fetch some wood, and, being entirely concealed from the lion's view above, by the intervening high reeds, we actually met face to face!

"The first notice I got was his sudden spring to one side, accompanied by repeated angry growls, whilst I involuntarily made a convulsive spring backwards, at the same time giving a fearful shriek, such as I never before remember uttering. I fancied just as he growled that he was coming upon me. We now heaped on more wood, and kept up a very strong fire until the day dawned, the lions feasting beside us all the time, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the little native, who, with a true Bechuana spirit, lamenting the loss of so much good flesh, kept constantly shouting and pelting them with flaming brands."

We must now take leave of our author, rather reluctantly; for, did our space permit, we would willingly follow him to the Limpopo, the rarest river in the world for the huge and unwieldy hippopotamus. But we think we have said and extracted enough to explain to the reader the true character of this remarkable record of enterprise. As a literary work it wants polish. Mr Cumming's hand is far more familiar with the rifle than the pen; and we also regret the absence of those minute and delicate descriptions of outward nature, and the almost poetical sketches, which lend such a peculiar charm to the volumes of Mr St John and the Stuarts. There is also somewhat too much of sameness and repetition. Even in a sporting volume it is expedient to select a few salient points for amplification and detail, and to deal more generally with the rest of the narrative. Nevertheless the book is a very remarkable one, and will entitle its author to be ranked as an explorer as well as a sportsman.