

requested to be allowed to remain among these founts of antiquity day and night. In his unwearied and invincible zeal he brought his meals with him, and declared that rest was out of the question until he was satisfied which of his ancestors were "Roberts," and which "Johns," from the time of the Seventh Henry. A hair-brained quack doctor has seriously asserted his claim to a large quantity of these public documents.

On the other hand, persons really interested in these records take no heed of them. Messrs. Brown, Smith, and Tomkins buy and sell manors and advowsons, Waltons and Stokes, and Combes cum Tythings, without knowing or caring that there are records of the actual transfers of the same properties between the holders of them since the days of King John! There is no sympathy for these things, even with those who might fairly be presumed to have a direct interest in the preservation of them, or with the public at large. Out of many examples of this sort, we need only cite one from the "Westminster Review:"—The Duke of Bedford inherits the Abbey of Woburn, and its monastic rights, privileges, and hereditaments; and there are public records, detailing with the utmost minuteness the value of this and all the church property which "Old Harry" seized, and all the stages of its seizure; the preliminary surveys to learn its value; perhaps the very surrender of the monks of Woburn; the annual value and detail of the possessions of the monastery whilst the Crown held it; the very particulars of the grant on which the letters patent to Lord John Russell were founded; the inrolment of the letters patent themselves. But neither his Grace of Bedford, the duke and lay impropiator, nor his brother, the Prime Minister and the historian, have seemed to regard these important documents as worthy of safe keeping.

On public grounds, nothing was for a long time done, although, as Bishop Nicholson said in 1714, "Our stores of Public Records are justly reckoned to excel in age, beauty, correctness, and authority, whatever the choicest archives abroad can boast of the like sort."

We are happy to perceive by the "Eleventh Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records" that the work of arranging, repairing, cleaning, cataloguing, and rendering accessible these documents, proceeds diligently. But we are more happy to discover that the disastrous adventures of our Public Records are nearly at an end. The Deputy Keeper acknowledges "with extreme satisfaction the receipt of communications made to Lord Langdale from the Lords Commissioners of Your Majesty's Treasury, intimating that their Lordships propose to commence the building of the Repository so emphatically urged by his Lordship the Master of the Rolls, and so long desired; the site thereof to be the Rolls Estate, and the Building to be comprehended within the boundaries of such

Estate, the said site being in all respects the best and most convenient which the metropolis affords."

A MIGHTIER HUNTER THAN NIMROD.

A GREAT deal has been said about the prowess of Nimrod, in connexion with the chase, from the days of him of Babylon to those of the late Mr. Apperley of Shropshire; but we question whether, amongst all the sporting characters mentioned in ancient or modern story, there ever was so mighty a hunter as the gentleman whose sporting calendar now lies before us.* The annals of the chase, so far as we are acquainted with them, supply no such instances of familiar intimacy with Lions, Elephants, Hippopotami, Rhinoceroses, Serpents, Crocodiles, and other furious animals, with which the human species in general is not very forward in cultivating an acquaintance.

Mr. Cumming had exhausted the Deer forests of his native Scotland; he had sighed for the rolling prairies and rocky mountains of the Far West, and was tied down to military routine as a Mounted Rifleman in the Cape Colony, when he determined to resign his commission into the hands of Government, and himself to the delights of hunting amidst the untrodden plains and forests of Southern Africa. Having provided himself with waggons to travel and live in, with bullocks to draw them, and with a host of attendants; a sufficiency of arms, horses, dogs, and ammunition, he set out from Graham's-Town, in October 1843. From that period his hunting adventures extended over five years, during which time he penetrated from various points and in various directions from his starting-place in lat. 33 down to lat. 20, and passed through districts upon which no European foot ever before trod; regions where the wildest of wild animals abound—nothing less serving Mr. Cumming's ardent purpose.

A lion story in the early part of his book will introduce this fearless hunter-author to our readers better than the most elaborate dissection of his character. He is approaching Colesberg, the northernmost military station belonging to the Cape Colony. He is on a trusty steed, which he calls also "Colesberg." Two of his attendants on horseback are with him. "Suddenly," says the author, "I observed a number of vultures seated on the plain about a quarter of a mile ahead of us, and close beside them stood a huge lioness, consuming a blesblok which she had killed. She was assisted in her repast by about a dozen jackals, which were feasting along with her in the most friendly and confidential manner. Directing my followers' attention to the spot, I remarked, 'I see the lion;' to which

* A Hunter's Life in South Africa. By R. Gordon Cumming, Esq., of Altyre.

they replied, 'Whar? whar? Yah! Almagtig! dat is he;' and instantly reining in their steeds and wheeling about, they pressed their heels to their horses' sides, and were preparing to betake themselves to flight. I asked them, what they were going to do? To which they answered, 'We have not yet placed caps on our rifles.' This was true; but while this short conversation was passing, the lioness had observed us. Raising her full round face, she overhauled us for a few seconds and then set off at a smart canter towards a range of mountains some miles to the northward; the whole troop of jackals also started off in another direction; there was, therefore, no time to think of caps. The first move was to bring her to bay, and not a second was to be lost. Spurring my good and lively steed, and shouting to my men to follow, I flew across the plain, and, being fortunately mounted on Colesberg, the flower of my stud, I gained upon her at every stride. This was to me a joyful moment, and I at once made up my mind that she or I must die." The lioness soon after "suddenly pulled up, and sat on her haunches like a dog, with her back towards me, not even deigning to look round. She then appeared to say to herself, 'Does this fellow know who he is after?' Having thus sat for half a minute, as if involved in thought, she sprang to her feet, and facing about, stood looking at me for a few seconds, moving her tail slowly from side to side, showing her teeth, and growling fiercely. She next made a short run forwards, making a loud, rumbling noise like thunder. This she did to intimidate me; but, finding that I did not flinch an inch, nor seem to heed her hostile demonstrations, she quietly stretched out her massive arms, and lay down on the grass. My Hottentots now coming up, we all three dismounted, and drawing our rifles from their holsters, we looked to see if the powder was up in the nipples, and put on our caps. While this was doing, the lioness sat up, and showed evident symptoms of uneasiness. She looked first at us, and then behind her, as if to see if the coast were clear; after which she made a short run towards us, uttering her deep-drawn murderous growls. Having secured the three horses to one another by their rheims, we led them on as if we intended to pass her, in the hope of obtaining a broadside; but this she carefully avoided to expose, presenting only her full front. I had given Stofolus my Moore rifle, with orders to shoot her if she should spring upon me, but on no account to fire before me. Kleinboy was to stand ready to hand me my Purdey rifle, in case the two-grooved Dixon should not prove sufficient. My men as yet had been steady, but they were in a precious stew, their faces having assumed a ghastly paleness; and I had a painful feeling that I could place no reliance on them. Now, then, for it, neck or nothing! She is within sixty yards of us, and she keeps advancing. We turned the horses' tails to

her. I knelt on one side, and, taking a steady aim at her breast, let fly. The ball cracked loudly on her tawny hide, and crippled her in the shoulder; upon which she charged with an appalling roar, and in the twinkling of an eye she was in the midst of us. At this moment Stofolus's rifle exploded in his hand, and Kleinboy, whom I had ordered to stand ready by me, danced about like a duck in a gale of wind. The lioness sprang upon Colesberg, and fearfully lacerated his ribs and haunches with her horrid teeth and claws; the worst wound was on his haunch, which exhibited a sickening, yawning gash, more than twelve inches long, almost laying bare the very bone. I was very cool and steady, and did not feel in the least degree nervous, having fortunately great confidence in my own shooting; but I must confess, when the whole affair was over, I felt that it was a very awful situation, and attended with extreme peril, as I had no friend with me on whom I could rely. When the lioness sprang on Colesberg, I stood out from the horses, ready with my second barrel for the first chance she should give me of a clear shot. This she quickly did; for, seemingly satisfied with the revenge she had now taken, she quitted Colesberg, and, slewing her tail to one side, trotted sulkily past within a few paces of me, taking one step to the left. I pitched my rifle to my shoulder, and in another second the lioness was stretched on the plain a lifeless corpse."

This is, however, but a harmless adventure compared with a subsequent escapade—not with one, but with six lions. It was the hunter's habit to lay wait near the drinking-places of these animals, concealed in a hole dug for the purpose. In such a place on the occasion in question, Mr. Cumming—having left one of three rhinoceroses he had previously killed as a bait—enscensed himself. Such a savage festival as that which introduced the adventure, has never before, we believe, been introduced through the medium of the softest English and the finest hot-pressed paper to the notice of the civilised public. "Soon after twilight," the author relates, "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 hyænas, and from twenty to thirty jackals, feasting on and around the carcasses of the three rhinoceroses. The lions feasted peacefully, but the hyænas 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 hyænas 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."

The hunters were presently 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 comrades 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."

Mr. Cumming's adventures with elephants are no less thrilling. He had selected for the aim of his murderous rifle two huge female elephants from a herd. "Two of the troop had walked slowly past at about sixty yards, and the one which I had selected was feeding

with two others on a thorny tree before me. My hand was now as steady as the rock on which it rested, so, taking a deliberate aim, I let fly at her head, a little behind the eye. She got it hard and sharp, just where I aimed, but it did not seem to affect her much. Uttering a loud cry, she wheeled about, when I gave her the second ball, close behind the shoulder. All the elephants uttered a strange rumbling noise, and made off in a line to the northward at a brisk ambling pace, their huge fanlike ears flapping in the ratio of their speed. I did not wait to load, but ran back to the hillock to obtain a view. On gaining its summit, the guides pointed out the elephants; they were standing in a grove of shady trees, but the wounded one was some distance behind with another elephant, doubtless its particular friend, who was endeavouring to assist it. These elephants had probably never before heard the report of a gun; and having neither seen nor smelt me, they were unaware of the presence of man, and did not seem inclined to go any further. Presently my men hove in sight, bringing the dogs; and when these came up, I waited some time before commencing the attack, that the dogs and horses might recover their wind. We then rode slowly towards the elephants, and had advanced within two hundred yards of them, when, the ground being open, they observed us, and made off in an easterly direction; but the wounded one immediately dropped astern, and next moment she was surrounded by the dogs, which, barking angrily, seemed to engross her attention. Having placed myself between her and the retreating troop, I dismounted, to fire within forty yards of her, in open ground. Colesberg was extremely afraid of the elephants, and gave me much trouble, jerking my arm when I tried to fire. At length I let fly; but, on endeavouring to regain my saddle, Colesberg declined to allow me to mount; and when I tried to lead him, and run for it, he only backed towards the wounded elephant. At this moment I heard another elephant close behind; and on looking about I beheld the 'friend,' with uplifted trunk, charging down upon me at top speed, shrilly trumpeting, and following an old black pointer named Schwart, that was perfectly deaf, and trotted along before the enraged elephant quite unaware of what was behind him. I felt certain that she would have either me or my horse. I, however, determined not to relinquish my steed, but to hold on by the bridle. My men, who of course kept at a safe distance, stood aghast with their mouths open, and for a few seconds my position was certainly not an enviable one. Fortunately, however, the dogs took off the attention of the elephants; and just as they were upon me I managed to spring into the saddle, where I was safe. As I turned my back to mount, the elephants were so very near, that I really expected to feel one of their trunks lay hold of me. I rode

up to Kleinboy for my double-barrelled two-grooved rifle: he and Isaac were pale and almost speechless with fright. Returning to the charge, I was soon once more alongside, and, firing from the saddle, I sent another brace of bullets into the wounded elephant. Colesberg was extremely unsteady, and destroyed the correctness of my aim. The 'friend' now seemed resolved to do some mischief, and charged me furiously, pursuing me to a distance of several hundred yards. I therefore deemed it proper to give her a gentle hint to act less officiously, and accordingly, having loaded, I approached within thirty yards, and gave it her sharp, right and left, behind the shoulder; upon which she at once made off with drooping trunk, evidently with a mortal wound. Two more shots finished her: on receiving them she tossed her trunk up and down two or three times, and falling on her broadside against a thorny tree, which yielded like grass before her enormous weight, she uttered a deep hoarse cry and expired."

Mr. Cumming's exploits in the water are no less exciting than his land adventures. Here is an account of his victory over a hippopotamus, on the banks of the Limpopo river, near the northernmost extremity of his journeyings.

"There were four of them, three cows and an old bull; they stood in the middle of the river, and, though alarmed, did not appear aware of the extent of the impending danger. 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 still 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."

There is nothing in "Waterton's Wanderings," or in the "Adventures of Baron Munchausen" more startling than this "Waltz with a Hippopotamus!"

In the all-wise disposition of events, it is perhaps ordained that wild animals should be subdued by man to his use at the expense of such tortures as those described in the work before us. Mere amusement, therefore, is too light a motive for dealing such wounds and death Mr. Cumming owns to; but he had other motives,—besides a considerable profit he has reaped in trophies, ivory, fur, &c., he has made in his book some valuable contributions to the natural history of the animals he wounded and slew.

CHIPS.

A MARRIAGE IN ST. PETERSBURG.

A FAIR Correspondent supplies us with the following "Chip" from St. Petersburg:—

In England we used to think the marriage ceremony, with all its solemn adjuncts, an impressive affair; but it is child's play when compared with the elaborate formalities of a Russian wedding. In England, the bride, though a principal, is a passive object; but in Russia she has, before and at the ceremony, to undergo as much physical fatigue and exertion as a prima donna who has to tear through a violent opera, making every demonstration of the most passionate grief. But you shall hear how they manage on these occasions.

The housekeeper of Mons. A., who has been in his service for eighteen years, and consequently no very youthful bride, took it into her head to marry a shoemaker, who,