

Review.

FIVE YEARS OF A HUNTER'S LIFE IN THE FAR INTERIOR OF SOUTH AFRICA; by R. G. CUMMING, Esq. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850.

Mr. Cumming—though full of the adventurous spirit—has not followed the daring foot-steps of a Park or a Clapperton into the interior of Africa,—that land of mystery which even the lives of intrepid explorers have been sacrificed, in vain, to clear up. It has not been his arduous mission to trace the unknown path,—to discover the hidden source,—of ancient rivers; neither had he before him, to repel rash curiosity, the intimidating prospect of hostile savages aiming the poisoned arrow at his breast. Still, even Mr. Cumming has been the explorer, as well as the hunter; and he has made his way into a region of wonders, not without considerable toil and suffering, and with no small risk of health and even of life. From the outskirts of the Cape Colony to the Equinoctial line there lies a remarkable region, of alternate barrenness and fertility, which few individuals have cared personally to examine. The scientific Mr. Burchall was able to penetrate only as far as 26° S. lat.: Mr. Cumming, we presume, has gone beyond him, for his limit was the Baman-gwato territory, which, he tells us had never been reached before by any European; and of which, on the strength of our author's statement, we are willing to believe that every one else—Mr. Cumming excepted—is as profoundly ignorant as ourselves.

In this part of Southern Africa—that is, between Cape Colony and about 25° S.—there lie many fertile tracts where large and beautiful rivers roll, lofty and luxuriant forests wave, and the greenest valleys are lighted up by the sun of a bright, but, it must be confessed, sometimes too glowing sky. Diversified with craggy summit, solemn wood, and smoothly-carpeted vale; redolent with the perfume of a thousand flowers; and shaded with the peculiarly wide-spreading branches of some of the African trees, the landscape, as Mr. Cumming describes it, is frequently enchanting; but it is guarded by arid, sun-baked deserts called Karroos, where springs of water are few; hard to be discovered, and, with the exception of the strongest fountains, soon dried up in the warmest season of the year. The Great Karroo, which lies next to the British and Dutch settlements, is 300 miles in length, and 100 in breadth—a desolate region with which the present Bishop of Cape Town, to judge from his recently published journal, seems to be tolerably familiar. It is over several cheerless and heated expanses of sterile table land like these that the venturesome trader or enthusiastic hunter must wend his way, with panting oxen dragging his moveable house in the shape of the Cape Wagon—himself, in all probability, consuming with fever and thirst, before he can set his foot on the land of elephants or track the lion to his lair. All the difficulties of such an expedition considered, Mr. Cumming, who entered on it without so much as a single white-faced companion, must get the credit of being a bold and fearless man,—a character which exhibits itself indisputably enough in the perfect coolness and determination with which he attacks, wheresoever he finds them, the elephant, the rhinoceros, and most of all, the lion. We should be glad to say that Mr. Cumming is a humane, as well as a brave man; but from this character his indiscriminate and promiscuous slaughter shuts him out. He raises his rifle at every living animal that crosses his path, be it antelope, giraffe, elephant, or lion; and even where the distance makes it improbable that he will kill, he fires nevertheless and sends many a poor brute creature wounded, to die in slow agony in the desert or in the wood. Nothing can be said in justification of this: it is somewhat more manly than Domitian's sport, but hardly more humane. We take it for granted that Mr. Cumming in Scotland will have little opportunity for indulging in this wholesale massacre; and we hope that he will not feel it unworthy of him to think, now and then, with some sadness and compunction, of the graceful antelope whose agile limbs were so often checked in their timorous boundings by his almost unerring rifle-ball, and of the tall giraffe whose stately head was so often laid low by his keen aim,—both slaughtered, not for food always, but too frequently for sanguinary amusement. All such amusement every sportsman, of true Christian feeling, will abhor.

Mr. Cumming's work is a remarkable work: it contains valuable information—not scientifically stated, but still useful for scientific purposes—and it abounds with much entertaining narrative. Still, as one shooting scene is very much like another, and as the particulars are given in almost every case, there is a good deal of wearisome repetition and the minuteness with which the dying pangs of some of the animals are described is, at times, heart-sickening. Still, with all its imperfections—and with all the painful feelings to which in some minds it will give rise—it is unquestionably a remarkable book, and will no doubt be very generally read.

Let these preliminary reflexions suffice to introduce the reader to the following extracts.

THE HONEY-BIRD.

"This extraordinary little bird, which is about the size of a chaffinch, and of a light gray colour, will in-

variably lead a person following it to a wild-bees' nest. Chattering and twittering in a state of great excitement, it perches on a branch beside the traveller, endeavouring by various wiles to attract his attention; and having succeeded in doing so, it flies lightly forward in a wavy course in the direction of the bees' nest, alighting now and then, and looking back to ascertain if the traveller is following it, and all the time keeping up an incessant twitter. When at length it arrives at the hollow tree or deserted white ants' hill which contains the honey, it for a moment hovers over the nest, pointing to it with its bill, and then takes up its position on a neighbouring branch, anxiously awaiting its share of the spoil. When the honey is taken, which is accomplished by first stupefying the bees by burning grass at the entrance of their domicile, the honey-bird will often lead to a second and even to a third nest. The person thus following it ought to whistle. The savages in the interior, while in pursuit, have several charmed sentences which they use on the occasion. The wild bee of Southern Africa exactly corresponds with the domestic garden bee of England. They are very generally diffused throughout every part of Africa, bees-wax forming a considerable part of the cargoes of ships trading to the Gold and Ivory Coasts, and the deadly district of Sierra Leone, on the western shores of Africa.

"Interesting as the honey-bird is, and though sweet be the stores to which it leads, I have often had cause to wish it far enough, as, when following the warm 'spoor' or track of elephants, I have often seen the savages at moments of the utmost importance, resign the spoor of the beasts to attend to the summons of the bird. Sometimes, however they are 'sold,' it being a well-known fact, both among the Hottentots and tribes of the interior, that they often lead the unwary pursuer to danger, sometimes guiding him to the mid-day retreat of a grizzly lion, or bringing him suddenly upon the den of the crouching panther. I remember on one occasion, about three years later, when weary with warring against the mighty elephants and hippopotami which roam the vast forests and sport in the floods of the fair Limpopo, having mounted a pair of unwieldy shot-barrels, I sought recreation in the humbler pursuit of quail-shooting. While thus employed, my attention was suddenly invited by a garrulous honey-bird, which pertinaciously adhered to me for a considerable time heedless of the reports made by my gun. Having bagged as many quails and partridges as I cared about shooting, I whistled lustily to the honey bird, and gave him chase: after following him to a distance of upward of a mile, through the open glades adjoining the Limpopo, he led me to an unusually vast crocodile, who was lying with his entire body concealed, nothing but his horrid head being visible above the surface of the water, his eyes anxiously watching the movements of eight or ten large bull buffaloes, which, in seeking to quench their thirst in the waters of the river, were crackling through the dry reeds as they cautiously waded in the deep mud that a recent flood had deposited along the edge. Fortunately for the buffaloes, the depth of the mud prevented their reaching the stream, and thus the scaly monster of the river was disappointed of his prey.

TRADING WITH THE NATIVES.

"While Sicomy was taking his coffee, he told me that he had dispatched men to bring elephants' teeth which he said were at a distance, and that he would purchase everything as quickly as possible, that I might be enabled to leave the country before the Matabili should come. This rumour about the Matabili I at the time suspected to be a fabrication, but I subsequently ascertained that it was a fact.

In the forenoon I occupied myself in writing my journal in my wagon, and I could see that the king was annoyed at my indifference about the trading. At length he asked me to come out of the wagon, saying that he had got a present for me, and he brought forward the elephant's tusk which lay beneath the wagon. Having thanked him, I expressed myself satisfied with his present, and, in return immediately presented him with what he reckoned an equivalent in beads. He asked me the price of my muskets, and I answered four large bull's teeth for each. He then retired to an adjacent grove of shady trees, where he sat conversing with his men for hours. Two men at length appeared, coming from opposite directions, each bearing a bull's tooth. When these arrived, Sicomy ordered them to be placed before me, and, calling Isaac, he inflicted on me a long harangue, talking all manner of nonsense, and endeavouring to obtain a musket for these two teeth. At length a third tusk was brought, but it was a small one. It was now late in the afternoon, so I told the king that I was going to take a walk in the mountains to obtain a view of his country. He said that he was going to buy one of the muskets immediately, and requested that I would not leave the wagons. After sitting talking with his men till it was near sunset, he once more offered me two tusks for a gun. I replied that I had already spoken. He then said he was going home, and that he did not know if he would come again to trade with me. If the king had indeed resolved not to trade with me, no request on my part would have altered the case. So I replied that I had never asked him to purchase anything, and was perfectly indifferent whether he did or did not; that there were other chiefs who were anxious to purchase my goods, and that my reason for visiting his territory was to enjoy the sport of elephant hunting. Having thus spoken, I wished him good evening, and, shouldering my rifle, stalked up the rocky ravine and shot two baboons.

"At an early hour on the following morning Sicomy was at the wagons, and, having breakfasted, he commenced as on the previous day to endeavour to purchase a gun with two tusks. At length I said he should have one for three tusks, provided they were large. After a protracted discussion, the third tusk was produced, when I handed him a musket. He next bothered for a bullet mold, which I also gave him into the bargain. Having obtained the mold, he insisted on having a lead-ladle. That I said I could not give him with one gun; but promised if he dealt liberally with me he should have one. He continued his importunity about the ladle till late in the afternoon, when he began to talk about buying a second gun. Three tusks were brought and we had nearly concluded a bargain, when some of his counsellors told him that he ought to have received powder and bullets along with the first gun. He commenced to pester me on this subject; but I stoutly resisted, and told him the bargain was concluded. He however, continued to harp on this string till a late hour, when I told him, as I had done the preceding day, that I must now take a walk; and I remarked that, if he thought he had given too much for my gun, he had better return it, and take away his tusks. Having consulted a short time with his wise men, he returned the gun, and resumed possession of the tusks. I then shouldered my rifle, and held for the wells, to give the dogs water."

One reason why the world is not reformed, is, because every man would have others make a beginning, and never think of himself. ADAM.

GOD'S WAYS ARE THE BEST.

About forty years ago, when I was a lad, living in the village of A——, I used, with several other young fellows, my companions, to be very fond of stealing into a beautiful park close by, belonging to a very rich gentleman, whose name I shall not mention. We never did any mischief; but we were always turned out if discovered. The gentleman to whom the house and park belonged had inherited a large estate; we youngsters used to call him nabob. Rich as he was, he never seemed to think he had enough; it is a sad thing when the love of wealth has so tight a grasp on the heart of man. He had not an open hand for the poor, he was always engaged in speculations for the increase of his fortune; but that only speculation which could not fail, he would not venture upon. He added field to field, enlarging his immense domains enclosing himself in on every side, and shutting his gates against the poor. His lady was as haughty as he was fond of riches; she held her head high among the neighbours; she seemed to fancy she conferred a favour in associating with them, and she too cared little for the wants of others. I often think we humble folk would less envy the rich, if we considered how money sometimes hardens the heart.

"There was one object on which all the affections of both these wealthy people were centered; there was only one being who possessed the key that could open their closed hearts. This was their son, their only child. He was the idol to whom this amassed wealth was sacrificed; all was for him: this was the excuse. Talk to them of the duty of giving to the poor, of being courteous to all around; they would point to their son, and answer, it was all for Francis; it was a duty to provide for their child, it was a duty to keep only such company as would be fit for the position he would hold hereafter. Yes; the owner of such wealth was to found a family, he was to be a member of parliament, to obtain a baronetcy, perhaps in the course of time a peerage. There was no end to the schemes of grandeur that flitted through the brain of the rich old man."

"And was Francis a good boy?" Edward asked; "did he deserve all their kindness?"

"Yes; he was a fine promising youth, with a kind open heart and great love of generosity. Many a time, from his own pocket-money, would he relieve the beggar who had been spurred away from his father's door. He had probably learned many good things from his tutor, who was a pious man, for the boy had some signs of a well-trained mind; he loved going to church, and had a reverent manner."

"How very happy!" exclaimed Alice; "because then, when he grew up, his great wealth would help him to be useful, and so his pious training would turn to good account."

"It did turn to good account, Miss Alice in God's own way. Not far from the park lived a clergyman's widow, who had seven sons and not wherewithal to bring them up. She was very poor; but being a well educated lady, it would have been a sore grief to her to rear her sons to be anything but gentlemen. But yet the hard struggle she was put to, to give her two eldest a college education, perhaps few would credit; and when she had succeeded in this, she could not afford the same to the others; but only trusted she might get them into the army or navy. But the bitter trial she had was with Allan, her seventh son; he was a puny, sickly creature; at ten years old he looked like a boy of six; he was always ailing, and with his numerous illnesses he cost his poor mother more than all his brothers. What to do with her miserable boy the unfortunate widow really knew not; she could not afford to educate him for a learned profession, his bodily health would not admit of an active one, and to leave him without a profession was to leave him penniless. She often looked at him and sighed. Her neighbours, when they saw her trouble, would say to each other, 'What a mercy it would be if that poor lad were to die early!' So people talk of mercies; nobody ever seems to think that God's ways are the best."

"The rich and healthy Francis and the poor and sickly Allan were of exact the same age, and they were frequently companions; it suited the generous disposition of the former to endeavour to cheer up his friend, and encourage him on to manly games."

"One winter's morning the two youths were together, and a sudden fancy seized Francis that he would skate; and, urged on by his brave companion, Allan too ventured upon the ice. You perhaps presage the rest. There had been a hard frost; but a slight thaw had commenced, which the heedless boys did not perceive. They ventured on a part of the lake where the ice was thin; Francis was urging Allan forward—the ice broke—they disappeared. It was some time before their bodies were drawn from the water; and then the usual measures for restoring persons apparently drowned were resorted to; but only one was thereby saved. My lord, probably you would have thought it better that Francis should be that one?"

"Oh, surely!" exclaimed Edward.

"So thought every one; but so had not decreed the allwise God. The sickly, destitute youth, whose present existence was a burden to himself

and his family, and whose future prospects were so gloomy, recovered: the vigorous and manly boy, the idol of his parents, the heir to thousands, the object of general love and admiration, died: God took him."

"How could that be for the best?" asked Edward.

"Listen, and you shall hear. The grief of the parents' words are too poor to tell; but it was a proud and stubborn grief, that refused to bow to the chastening Hand. They buried themselves in their own home, refusing alike the sympathy of friends and the consolation of religion. There was one object on whom they could not bear to look, and this was poor Allan; he was associated in their minds with all that was most dreadful to think of; they felt as if he were the murderer of their son, or at least as if his safety had proved the death of their child. So they took a bitter aversion to the harmless boy, and would turn away their eyes if ever he crossed their path. The widow, feeling deep compassion for their unhappy state, and though ignorant of their aversion to her son, still supposing that his presence might perpetually recall their sorrow to their minds, begged of a friend to receive him for a few months, and thus contrived to send him away. She hoped that the lapse of time might heal the wounded hearts; and her hope was partly realized. Though the father remained stubborn, God touched the heart of the bereaved mother, and she was softened."

"Another twelvemonth saw a wondrous change in the lady of that spacious hall. Sorrow had made her alive to the sufferings of others; and she, who had formerly been too proud to associate with her equals, was to be seen by the bedside of the poor, soothing their pain or relieving their wants. The hardest hearts could not have seen that afflicted woman, dressed in deep black, slowly walking through the village, her eyes bent on the ground, and her proud and once erect figure slightly stooping, as though sorrow had actually bowed her down, without melting into pity and raising a prayer for her. Poor lady! my heart bleeds for her even now; but the good God knows best the way to bring His children to penitence. A penitent she truly was; she gave the greatest proof of it mortal man can give—by conquering her own deepest feelings."

"It was little more than a year after the dreadful accident, that the widow-lady, Allan's mother, was surprised by a visit from the lady of the hall. She has since found it difficult to say whether astonishment at the honour, or pity for the traces of grief in the face of her guest, were uppermost in her mind as she bade her welcome. But the lady's visit was short. 'I come,' she said, 'to make you a request.' Her voice faltered; but, with a struggle she continued: 'I wish to make such amends as I can for former faults, and it is in your power to help me.' The widow was at a loss how to answer. 'God took my boy,' resumed the afflicted mother, 'and restored you yours. From that moment I disliked him, as though he had been the destroyer of my child. But God has been pleased to show me my sin; and, as some poor amends, I wish to educate your boy instead of mine.' The astonished mother of course consented: and from that day the lady of the hall paid for poor Allan's education from her own private purse. She did not take him to live with her, because her husband had not made the same self-conquest as she had done; moreover, it would have been bad for the youth to have been brought up in a luxury which afterwards he would have been forced to renounce. But she placed him under a worthy tutor near the sea-side, where he improved in bodily health, as well as in learning."

"Many years passed on; Allan had overgrown the delicacy of his constitution, and had done credit to the advantages of his education. He had been brought up to be a lawyer, and was getting on well in his profession, and he had married a pretty, accomplished lady. His heart was ever grateful to the kind friend to whom he owed every thing, and she in her turn had learned to love the object of her own bounty. Yes, she tenderly loved him whom once her unsubdued heart hated. His improved health, his success in the world, were to her like a token of God's forgiveness. Her poor husband meanwhile had sunk into the apathy of old age, indifference had taken the place of dislike; so that Allan needed no longer to conceal himself from his sight, or perhaps he hardly recognized in the graceful, handsome youth, the sickly playfellow of his lost son. Sometimes if a fit of moroseness came over him, Allan's wife would play to him on the harp, and, like the Psalmist to Saul, drive the evil spirit from him with her sweet voice. This, however, was only during an occasional visit; for Allan's home was elsewhere."

"Such was the state of things, when a young man who had been many years abroad came forward, and declared that he had a prior title to the estates of the lady and her husband; and that the spacious hall and all the lands were his by law. It was passing strange, no one could credit it; and many thousand pounds were expended on both sides, while the matter went through the tedious business of a law-suit. For my part, I have never pretended to understand the case up to this day—it was always far beyond my comprehension; but one part