



PLATE XXX. 1. HYÆNA CROCUTA: THE SPOTTED HYÆNA.  
2. HYÆNA FUSCA: THE FUSCOUS HYÆNA.  
3. HYÆNA VENATICA: THE WILD DOG.

## PLATE XXX.

### 1. HYÆNA CROCUTA.—THE SPOTTED HYÆNA.

*Wolf* of the Cape Colonists. *Impeese* of the Matabili.

GENERIC CHARACTER.—Height of both sexes at the shoulder about two feet six or eight inches; much less at the rump. Extreme length about five feet ten inches. Feet with four toes; nails non-retractile. Head short, and very broad; muzzle and nose black. Lower part of the head, throat, belly, and inner surfaces of the extremities, dingy white. General colour of the other parts fulvous brown, irregularly blotched with circular black spots. Tail sixteen inches; the lower two-thirds of its length furnished with long black hairs forming a tassel. Hair on the back of the neck and withers, long, forming a reversed mane. Both sexes furnished with a glandular pouch below the tail.

Very common everywhere.

### 2. HYÆNA FUSCA.—THE FUSCOUS HYÆNA.

*Straand Wolf* of the Cape Colonists.

GENERIC CHARACTER.—Usual height at the shoulder, about two feet four inches; much lower behind. Extreme length about four feet ten inches. Hair very long and shaggy on the upper parts of the neck, back, and tail. General colour reddish grey, brindled with brown and black stripes and spots. Extremities yellowish, with deep black transverse bands. Tail twelve inches; black, with red hairs towards the tip.

Female similar. Less abundant than the preceding, but common along the sea coast.

### 3. HYÆNA VENATICA.—THE WILD DOG.

*Wilde Hond* of the Cape Colonists.

GENERIC CHARACTER.—Height at the shoulder under two feet; rather lower behind. Length about four feet three inches. Form slight. Legs slender and crooked; muzzle pointed. Ground colour of the hair sandy bay, or ochraceous yellow, irregularly blotched and brindled with black and white variegated spots of exceedingly irregular shape. Face, nose, and muzzle, black. Ears ample, and rounded. Tail bushy, like that of a fox, divided about the middle by a black ring, above which the colour is sandy, and below, white.

Common. Hunts in large organized packs.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE HYÆNAS, AND THE WILD DOG.

" And their white trunks crunch'd o'er the whiter skull,  
As it slipp'd through their jaws when the edge grew dull,  
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,  
Where they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed,  
So well had they broken a lingering fast  
With those who had fallen for that night's repast."

WITH a view of correctly obtaining the synonymes of the various species of game quadrupeds that form the subjects of the foregoing portraits, it was my wont, whensoever a savage crowd of either sex assembled round our caravan, to display the drawings from the end of the waggon; and the exhibition, whilst it fully answered my purpose, was invariably attended with diverting theatric effect. Although in India, even well educated natives are extremely slow in recognizing objects upon paper, each animal was in its turn acknowledged by the sable daughters of Africa, who did not fail to pronounce the native name, or with animated gestures to invite the attention of their neighbours to the sight. This fact will appear the less extraordinary when it is considered how constantly the originals are before the eyes of these unsophisticated damsels, and moreover that upon the success of the chase every savage is dependent for both food and raiment. The names of the *feræ naturæ* are in fact ever in their mouths; and a long line of women and girls may often be seen working in the fields, their *piochs* or mattocks raised like a company of Amazons under arms, ready to be stuck into the ground at a given signal, and their toil animated by a ditty which comprises the name of every useful animal that their country can afford. Among my motley audience the production of the "noble elephant" conjuring up recollections of the reigning despot, was followed by an involuntary elevation of the eyelids, but no lips dared to profane the royal title. On beholding the towering Giraffe, all clapped their hands together, exclaiming in an ecstasy of delight *Intootla! Intootla!! Intootla!!!* mounting at the same time on tiptoe, and craning their greasy necks in order to make the most of their dumpy figures. *Imfoobo*, the apoplectic-looking Hippopotamus, caused all beholders to inflate their cheeks and distend their stomachs, ladies who happened to be in a certain delicate condition being forthwith selected as objects of universal merriment; whilst *Impatoomo* induced those of the wanton party whose animal spirits were the most buoyant, to frisk and caper about in humble imitation of the absurd pranks of that madcap amongst beasts, the Gnoo. But upon the production of "the Emperor," the excitement became even more universal, a general flourish of weapons and thumping of shields on the part of the hitherto silent warriors, being accompanied by an application of fair hands to averted faces, and by exclamations of *Tao*, delivered in a subdued and piano tone. A liberal distribution of snuff and tobacco, together with a peep at their own umber faces in the looking-glass—that never-failing source of surprise and delight to uncivilized beings—for the most part concluded the entertainment; and this latter "merry disport," to use the words of old Holinshed, "so highly pleased them, that they expressed their inwardly conceived joy and delight with shrill shouts and variety of gestures."

Every four-footed denizen of Southern Africa that is fairly entitled to a place in the game catalogue, having now passed before the reader in order of review, it remains but to introduce those inseparable attendants upon the sportsman, the scavengers, who complete the work of demolition which the bullet from his grooved rifle shall have commenced. In a wild land where there exist such thronging legions of herbivorous quadrupeds, and where such a goodly host of the more formidable *Carnivora* are arrayed against them, it may well be conjectured that there lack not those more humble in the scale, who are at hand to gather up the scraps; and indeed, the multitude of birds of prey, as well as of carrion-eating *Mammiferes*, with which the country is overrun, fully attest the extent of the terrific carnage that must daily be committed.

Less addicted to putrefactions than either of the larger Hyænas, is the *wilde hond* or wild dog, already briefly noticed in these pages as taking the field in large organized bands, and without the aid of a whipper-in, committing extensive havoc among the antilopine tribes. The ravages of this diminutive but formidable species extends also to the flocks and herds of the Colonists; an ox, when detected asleep, being as surely deprived of more or less of its tail; whilst the flock of sheep upon which they may fall, whether at pasture or in the fold, is invariably mangled and mauled to an extent ten times exceeding the present wants of the depredators, who snap right and left, without the smallest respect either to age or sex. In the jungles of Western India I once witnessed the chase of a noble stag by a troop of these self hunting hounds; and although not so

fortunate as to see a pack in full cry over the desert plains of Africa, I very frequently disturbed them feasting upon the quarry which had rewarded their industry. On such occasions they were wont to retire sulkily to a little distance, and squatting on their hams, to utter a petulant sort of growl, which ended in a suppressed bark; their ample semicircular ears, neatly rounded as if with the cropping scissors—their black cheeks, bloated as though of the mumps—and their crooked spindle shanks, appearing to have been broken and clumsily spliced—imparting altogether an aspect sufficiently ludicrous. A shot fired into the middle of the kennel was on more than one occasion attended with fatal results; whereupon the survivors, clapping their bushy tricoloured tails betwixt their hinder legs, exhibited a set of snow-white teeth, and grinning repeatedly over their blotched shoulders, as if seeking to ascertain whether any farther mischief were meditated, went slouching off with a general howl.

Of the larger species of Hyæna, the *Straand Wolf* of the Colonists, covered with long, coarse, shaggy, grey hair, brindled, clouded, and barred, most nearly resembles the fetid resurrectionist found in Asia. Solitary in its habits, this animal is better known to residents along the Southern coast, where it banquets upon dead whales, and whatever offal may be rejected by the ocean, concealing its beauties during the day in some dormitory within the thick *bush* which extends in clumps throughout the districts which form its limited *habitat*.

But the “real indomitable laughing Hyæna,” whose spotted figure is ever conspicuous among his carrion-eating confederates, is by far the most formidable and rapacious of this foul-feeding class. Superior in size to the largest mastiff, and possessing under his bull-dog muzzle a power of jaw, which, whilst it is adapted for grinding the hardest bones, is exceeded in few of the *carnassiers*, all fish come alike to his net. He is in fact the vulture of quadrupeds. Feeding chiefly at night, he prowls about the country in skulking gangs, which often comprise twenty or more individuals, committing serious depredations, and eagerly revelling in all kinds of putrescence. Concealed during the day in some loathsome den, amid ruins, craggy rocks, and solitary thickets, as evening draws on, the gaunt bone-cracker commences its nocturnal foray, haunting the streets of inhabited villages after bedtime, strolling up and down the lanes in search of offal, carrying off dogs, and not unfrequently young children or infirm persons; its appetite for human flesh being so sharpened by the practice which obtains among the savage tribes of exposing their dead to be entombed in the maw of beasts of prey, that to pass the night in the open fields, and especially near the confines of a town, could not fail to prove a somewhat hazardous experiment.

The diet, deformity, and fierceness of the Hyæna having ever rendered it an object of extreme aversion to mankind, few animals have been more misrepresented, or few placed in a more odious light. Credulity has echoed the words of superstition, and the writings of the Greek and Roman naturalists, whilst they furnish abundant proof of the acquaintance of the ancients with the dastardly species, evince also that their knowledge was mixed up with a thousand absurdities which have been too currently received. Owing to a certain glandular pouch beneath the tail, it was believed that the animal could change its sex at pleasure—Pliny and other writers stoutly maintaining that the bone of the neck was jointless, on which account it was considered to possess a peculiar efficacy in magic incantations. Throughout Southern Africa, the sullen brute prowls through the crumbling relics of human dwellings—once thronged by busy thousands, but now chiefly tenanted by beasts of darkness; and during the ruthless wars which continually pull down the strength of her barbarous sons, and depopulate her soil, numbers follow the contending armies, escorted by the Jackal and the Vulture, with whom they would seem to have established a league of perpetual amity. Constant attendants upon the field of battle, these scavengers relieve the living from the trouble of disposing of the dead—the flap of the eagle’s wing, and the howl of the Hyæna forming the only death note of the fallen warrior.

“There as the fierce Hyæna stalks  
Through the lone desert’s dreary walks,  
At midnight, and his carnage plies,  
Woe to the half dead wretch who spies  
The glaring of those large blue eyes,  
Amid the darkness of the skies.”

Although more in awe of the superior weapons which it has to encounter within the Colonial limits, *de wolf* is yet a perfect bugbear in the eyes of the Batavian. The hand of every man is raised against him, and wheresoever his ill favoured face may be seen, a mob collects at his heels to hunt him down like a mad dog. Nightly may his long dismal howl be heard, answered from the farm houses by troops of dogs trolling up with him in full chorus—an unhappy wight being occasionally taken in a trap constructed with a hanging door, and baited with some tempting *morceau*, such as a dead dog or the entrails of a sheep. Miserable indeed is the fate that then awaits the captive. Bent on retaliating upon the hapless delinquent the misdeeds of his pilfering kindred, the Dutchmen indulge in a most savage pastime at his expense. A hind leg having been drawn betwixt the bars of the cage, is perforated above the hock, and a heavy waggon chain being hooked to the sinew, the victim is turned loose and baited till he dies. The carcase uniformly decomposes within a few hours, and so mephitic is the stench of the foul feeding beast, that its remains are invariably left untouched save by its own all devouring fraternity.

These hideous animals frequently annoyed us all night long by grunting round our fortifications, and by funereal moans aiding “the Jackal’s troop” in too successful endeavours to scare the sheep out of the enclosure. But we often had our revenge, and whilst in pursuit of other game, I several times accidentally knocked up the vagabond’s quarters. His bowed

hind legs and drooping crupper impart an awkward and shuffling gait when first roused from his lair, and it is some time before his stiff and rheumatic joints acquire suppleness; but after hobbling and limping a little distance he is enabled to scamper over hill and dale with ludicrous alacrity. Whilst his round blue tapers served during the dark nights as an excellent mark, the extreme clearness of the atmosphere, added to the brilliancy of the stars, usually favoured an accurate aim; and the largest of several slain during the campaign was by the clear light of the moon, shot through the broad cranium as he was in the act of skulking under our sheep pen. So timid had the little flock at last become from repeated depredations, which on more than one occasion extended to no fewer than three victims in a single night, that the slightest noise was sufficient to put the whole to flight—their truancy invariably resulting in the further diminution of their numbers. But the hardihood of the survivors became daily more the theme of admiration, an instance of footsoreness rarely occurring during the longest march. When it did, the unhappy cripple either rode in the omnibus, or was consigned to the *Fireworshipper*, at whose hands, for good and substantial reasons already assigned, he had little mercy to expect. Their timidity increasing in the ratio of their reduction in numerical strength, the remnant took alarm one dark night on the plains of the River Vaal, where no materials for a fence could be collected, and dashing off for the last time, ran into the embraces of a lurking gang of Bushmen.

Popular fable has assigned to the yelping Jackal the place of the Lion's provider; but the only part he actually sustains in the drama is that of gleaner up of the crumbs that fall from the Royal table. *Pukoli* abounds in many varieties from Barbary to the Cape of Good Hope, his soft silky skin being in high demand among the native tribes for the manufacture of cloaks, whilst the animal contributes no less essential service when living by assisting to clear the country, the suburbs of villages especially, from carrion in every stage of putrefaction. Scarcely had the sun sunk below the horizon, than attracted by the smell of the larder to the very limits of our camp, the impertinent intruders were wont to serenade us with a squall not very dissimilar from a concert of metropolitan cats on the housetop—their dismal laugh uttered at intervals throughout the night, responded to, bark for bark, by our dogs, and re-echoed back by all their own more remote companions who happened to be within hearing—together producing the most discordant and lugubrious of all possible music, and often eliciting a well merited volley of bullets in the direction whence their sad voices arose. The ears of my Indian readers are all sufficiently familiar with that

"mix'd and mournful sound  
" 'Twixt crying babe and beaten hound."

An opening note which serves as a signal for a general chorus, is frequently succeeded by a sudden yell from an hundred throats at once,—the long protracted scream, resounding through the solitudes during the stilly darkness, like the roll of the thunderclap immediately succeeding the flash—its effects being finest when the first shriek is faintly heard in the distance, and the answer bursts from several points at once, within a few yards of the elbow of the dozing auditor.

But the office of carrion scavenger is principally borne by various species of the Vulture, which are always collected near the abodes of man, and render excellent service to the community at large by removing offal and putrescent matter that would by accumulating corrupt the air with pestilential exhalations. There are several varieties of this obscene bird, to all of which the term *aasvogel* is indiscriminately applied by the Colonists—the most common being the small white species with yellow head and neck, one of the sacred birds of the Egyptians, known by the title of Pharaoh's hen.\* The solemn, slow, and measured movements of the large black species,† with sooty plumage, and bare livid rose-coloured head, has a funereal effect well adapted to its cadaverous employment; and there is in the gait and looks of all a heaviness which makes one feel half inclined to regard them as beasts rather than as birds of prey. Accustomed to feed in the society of the former, they are little disturbed by the presence even of dogs, and when driven away by a canine charge, walk round with the greatest ease and familiarity, returning immediately to the repast. Almost unable after a surfeit to rise from the ground, the harpy waddles round the bones which it has picked with an air of sombre and sinister gravity, a fetid discharge exuding from its nostrils, until at last, taking wing slowly, it retires to some inaccessible crag, where it perches phlegmatically for whole days together, motionless, in melancholy silence.

During the progress through the wilderness of our little band, we were instinctively attended by a relief of these gaunt and ravenous harpies, ever ready to pounce upon the carcasses of cattle that might perish by the way side, or, summoned by the well known crack of the rifle, to take possession of the quarry that had fallen—the promptitude they evinced in discovering booty, being scarcely less surprising than their alacrity in disposing of it. Roused from their torpor by the progress of digestion, and stimulated by the qualms of hunger, they have again mounted aloft to a vast aerial altitude until lost to human gaze; and sustained in the serene atmosphere upon outstretched but motionless pinions, scanning the surface of the earth from their towering elevation, they soar in wide and buoyant circles, reviewing at a glance the boundless tract of country which is to furnish them with prey, and inhaling with keen nostrils the odours that are wafted from the lower regions.

A herd of naked aborigines, besmeared and bedaubed with copious defilements of red clay, their hair clogged with fat and shining with *sibilo*, are usually the first to take possession of a newly fallen carcase, tearing and devouring which—tooth, nail, and assagai—with all the voracity of half famished barbarians, they at length succeed in stuffing themselves *usque ad nauseam*, and within an ace of suffocation. To these "greasy men," of whom the sole aim and object in life may be said

\* *Vultur percnopterus*.

† *V. Auricularis*.

to be "eating raw bowels and sleeping," succeed a host of Vultures, followed by a train of Hyænas and Jackals; their banquet which affords the subject of this my concluding scene, forming no inappropriate type of the scrambling carousal which has so recently terminated. Although the azure vault of heaven, free from all speck and blemish, may present no indication of the presence of these ubiquitous and filthy birds, yet no sooner has the quarry fallen, than a whizzing like that of the cloth yard from the bow, accompanied by a fusty and noisome effluvia, announces the descent upon earth of three or four *avant couriers*, who directing with their pointed beaks an impatient attack at the eyes and softer parts of the skin, speedily force in their way to

"the reeking entrails and yet quiv'ring heart."

Conjured into existence as if by some magic agency, multitudes are presently to be seen pouring to the repast—and hundreds still gathering from afar, are wheeling round and round at a prodigious height—a succession of intersecting circles, each sweeping lower than the last, constantly importing additional legions to the banquet. Then commences such fighting and sparring and snuffling, such tugging and tearing and gobbling, that half an hour is generally sufficient to reduce the largest carcase to mere skin and bones—the latter being picked as clean as if they had been boiled and scraped with a knife; until, gorged at last to the throat, and their portion of the business accomplished, they leave the residue to find a ready sepulchre in the voracious maw of the grave-diggers, who thrust in their broad bull-dog muzzles, and with the assistance of their brother scavengers so complete the work, as often to leave upon the wide plain scarcely one bone to attest the slaughter.

"From the mountains fall  
The lengthening shades—and the shrill Jackal  
Shrieks forth his hymn to the horned moon,  
And says that his master will follow soon;  
And the Wolf replies from his bone-strew'd brake,  
And tells that the Leopard is also awake  
And the Lynx and Hyæna join in the train  
All chanting to Hecate a joyful strain,  
For the rout is o'er and the carnage ceased,  
And the Vulture hath bidden them all to the feast."

"HUNTSMAN REST! THY CHASE IS DONE."

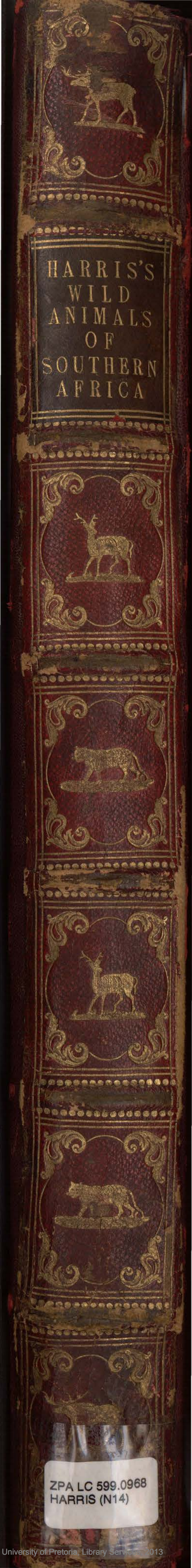
*SPOLIA OPIMA.*



*as preserved by Capt. Harris.*

FINIS CORONAT OPUS.





HARRIS'S  
WILD  
ANIMALS  
OF  
SOUTHERN  
AFRICA

ZPA LC 599.0968  
HARRIS (N14)