PLATE XXX.

1. HYÆNA CROCUTA.—THE SPOTTED HYÆNA.

WOLF of the Cape Colonists. Imposee 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.

**Strand 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 HYÉNAS, AND THE WILD DOG.

"And their white eyes glisten'd o'er the winter sky,
As it slipp'd through their jaws when the edge grew dull,
As they hobbled naught the burn's of the dead,
Where they came ere from hose the spot where they fell,
As well but they looked a lingering feet.
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, whenever 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 able 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 forae naturae are in fact ever in their mouths; and a long line of women and girls may often be seen working in the fields, their picks or mattocks raised like a company of Amazons under arms, ready to be stuck into the ground at a given signal, and their coal 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 ecstacy of delight Intootla! Intootla!! Intootla!!! mounting at the same time on tip toe, and causing their greyey necks in order to make the most of their dumpy figures. Impatoomo, the apoplectic-looking Hippopotamus, caused all beholders to inflate their cheeks and distend their stomachs, ladies who happened to be in a certain tiptoe, and craning their greasy necks in order to make the most of their dumpy figures. "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 indeed, the multitude of birds of prey, as well as of carrion-eating 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.

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 wide land 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 antelopine tribes. The ravages of this diminutive but formidable species extends also to the flocks and herds of the Colonists; as 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 moused 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 suckily to a little distance, and squatting on their haunches, to utter a petulant sort of growl, which ended in a suppressed bark; their ample semicircular ears, neatly rounded as if with the cupping 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; whereason the survivors, chipping their bony tinfoil-tailed 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 further mischief were meditated, went scowling off with a general howl.

Of the larger species of Hyena, the *Strand Wolf* of the Colonists, covered with long, coarse, shaggy, grey hair, bristled, clouded, and barred, most nearly resembles the field resurrectionist found in Asia. Solitary in its habits, this animal is better known to residents along the Southern coast, where it haunts 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 Hyena," whose spotted figure is ever conspicuous among his carrion-eating confederates, is by far the most formidable and repulsive 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 carnivora, all flesh 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 reveling in all kinds of putrefaction. Concealed during the day in some beet-haven den, amid ruins, craggy rocks, and solitary thickets, as evening draws on, the great 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 ferociousness of the Hyena 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, dwindle even 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 salen brute prows 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 unity. 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 bowl of the Hyena forming the only death note of the fallen warrior.

—*Tears to the fierce Hyena eyes.*

Through the how desert's dewy gleam,
At midnight, and his savages plain,
Way to the dead dead, whose eyes spin
The glint of those large keen eyes,
Awhile the darkness of the skies!"
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, motionless, in melancholy silence; 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 near in wide and bruyant 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.

During the progress through the wilderness of our little band, we were instinctively attended by a relief of those gauzy and ravensome 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 near in wide and bruyant 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, blemmed and bedaubed with copious defilements of red clay, their hair clogged with fat and shining with *shiselo*, are usually the first to take possession of a newly fallen carcass, tearing and devouring which—tooth, nail, and asagali—with all the voracity of half famished barbarians, they at length succeed in stuffing themselves wase ad *sawombe,* 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 Hymenae and Jackals; their banquet which affords the subject of this my concluding scene, forming no inappropriate type of the scrambling carousel 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 escort 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 rooking mouths and yet quivering hearts.”

 Conjured into existence as if by some magic agency, multitudes are presently to be seen pouring to the repast—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.

“HUNTERMAN REST! THY CHASE IS DONE.”

FINIS CORONAT OPUS.