

NARRATIVE

*South Africa*

OF

A RESIDENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

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scarcely any animal will come near the carcase. When they are once fairly killed, even dogs leave them with disgust. Yet none of those we destroyed ever remained two nights undevoured. Their own voracious kindred uniformly came in the night and ate them up, leaving scarcely a remnant of the skull and larger bones to show where the rest had found a sepulchre.

Three other species of the hyæna are distinguished in the colonial nomenclature, as the *strand-wolf*, *berg-wolf*, and the *wilde-hond*. The *strand-wolf* is found exclusively on the coast, as its name denotes. It is larger than the *tiger-wolf*, and is said to be of a dark-grey colour. The *berg-wolf*, or *mountain-hyæna*, is also large, and of a lighter hue. I have only seen the latter at a distance, and the *strand-wolf* not at all; but their habits I was told are very similar to those of the *tiger-wolf*. The *wilde-hond*, or *wild-dog* (*hyæna venatica*) is an animal with which the colonists are but too well acquainted. It was first accurately described, and classed as a hyæna, by Burchell. It forms in fact the connecting link between the wolf and hyæna families, and in its habits and physical conformation partakes of the character of both. These animals always hunt in packs; they are swift of foot, and, though not so powerful, are much fiercer than the other species of hyæna. When they break into a fold, or fall upon a flock of sheep in the field, they frequently kill and mangle ten times as many as they could possibly devour: they are consequently much dreaded by the farmer. Some of them have been occasionally tamed by the colonists. The *laughing-hyæna*, which I have repeatedly heard, but never seen, is reported by the colonists to be a distinct species, smaller than the three preceding; and is considered (I know not with what justice) to form a sort of link between the hyæna and the jackall families.

The hippopotamus still exists in the Great Fish river, towards its mouth, but it has become so scarce and shy as to be very seldom seen. It is more numerous in the Keisi. The

rhinoceros is nearly extirpated within the old limits of the colony; and even in the Ceded Territory it was so rare, that in all my excursions I never could even catch a glimpse of one. In the regions lying east and north of our frontier, however, hippopotami abound in all the larger rivers, and two species of rhinoceros inhabit the forests.

Of the South African buffalo (*bos caffer*) I can also say but little from personal knowledge; for though once numerous in Glen-Lynden and the adjoining districts, (as many local names testify, such as *Buffels-kloof*, *Buffels-hoek*, *Buffels-fontein*, &c.) these animals are now so rare and so shy in that vicinity, that I never saw more than one or two, and of these I caught only a distant and hasty glance. The following particulars were obtained from Dutch-African hunters of my acquaintance.

The buffalo is a very formidable and powerful animal. He is considerably larger than the domestic ox. The front of his head is nearly covered by an invulnerable helmet, formed of the extended roots of his gigantic horns; and his skin is so tough that it is difficult to kill him with small guns, or without a mixture of tin to harden the bullets. He is described to be, what indeed his aspect appears strongly to indicate, an animal of a fierce, treacherous, and savage disposition. Even when not provoked by wounds, or driven to extremity in the chase, it is said he will attack with the utmost ferocity his great enemy man, if he happen to intrude incautiously upon his haunts; and what renders him the more dangerous is his habit of skulking in the jungle when he observes travellers approaching, and then suddenly rushing out upon them. It has been remarked, too, (and this observation has been corroborated by the accurate Swedish naturalist Sparrman,) that if he succeeds in killing a man by goring and tossing him, he will stand over his victim afterwards for a long time, trampling upon him with his hoofs, crushing him with his knees, mangling the body with his horns, and stripping off the skin with his rough and prickly tongue. This he does not