

## THE CARACAL\*.

THOUGH the caracal resembles the lynx in size, figure, aspect, and the pencil of black hair on the tips of the ears, we are of opinion, from the disparities between these two animals, that they belong to different species. The caracal is not spotted like the lynx; his hair is rougher and shorter; his tail is longer, and of a uniform colour; his muzzle is also more lengthened; his aspect is less mild, and his disposition more ferocious. The lynx inhabits cold or temperate climates only; but the caracal is never found except in warm countries. It

\* The Persian cat, with a lengthened face, and small head, has long slender ears, terminated with a long tuft of black hairs. The inside and bottom of the ears, and *nostrils*, are white. The eyes are small; the upper part of the body is of a pale reddish brown colour, and the tail is rather darker. The belly and breast are whitish; the limbs are strong, and pretty long. The tail is about half the length of the body. Pennant's *Synops. of Quad.* p. 189.

In Turkish, *Karrab-Julak*; in Arabic, *Gazul Chalak*; in Persian, *Siyah-guth*. In all these three languages, the denomination signify the cat with black ears.

*Siyah-guth*; *Charlous, Exercitationes*, p. 21. *Rati Synops. Quad.* p. 163.

*Siyah-guth*. Auricula atra. Schach Saadi in libro *Gulistan* seu *rystan*, sexcentis circiter ab hinc annis confcripto, quem Persice et Latine edidit Georg. Gentius. Ubi vide apologum *Leoni et auriculæ atræ*, p. 81.

The lion's provider, or guide, according to several travellers.

is from these differences of disposition and climate that we have referred them to different species, as well as from the inspection and comparison of the two animals, both of which we have examined and drawn from the life.

This animal is common in Barbary, in Arabia, and in all the countries inhabited by the lion, the panther, and the ounce. Like them, he lives on prey; but, being smaller and weaker, it is with difficulty he procures subsistence; for he is generally obliged to be contented with what they leave. He keeps at a distance from the panther, because that animal exercises its cruelties after being fully gorged with prey. But he follows the lion, which, after a full repast, never injures any creature. The caracal feasts upon the offals of the lion's table, and sometimes follows, or goes before him, at no great distance, having nothing to apprehend from his rage; because he is unable, like the panther, to pursue the caracal to the tops of the tallest trees. For all these reasons the caracal has been called the lion's guide or provider\*. The latter, whose smell is not acute, employs the former to scent animals

\* The karacoulacs are animals somewhat larger than cats, and of the same make. They have black ears, nearly half a foot long, and from this circumstance they derive their name, which signifies *black ear*. According to the opinion of the natives, they serve as pioneers to the lion; for they go a little before, explore those places where prey is to be expected, and are rewarded with a share. When this animal gives the alarm

animals at a distance, and rewards him with a part of the spoil\*.

The caracal is about the size of a fox, but much stronger and more ferocious. He has been known to attack and instantly tear to pieces a middle-sized dog, which defended itself as long as it was able. He is extremely difficult to tame. However, when taken young, and reared with care, he may be trained to hunting, an

alarm to the lion, his cry resembles that of one person to another, though the voice is considerably sharper; *Voyage de Tlencant*, tom. iii. p. 114.

\* I saw an animal in an iron cage, which the Arabs called the lion's guide. It has so strong a resemblance to a cat, that it has been called the cat of Syria; and I saw another of them at Florence which went under the same name. He is so fierce, that, if any person attempts to take meat from him, he becomes perfectly furious, and, if not appeased, springs instantly upon the spoiler. There are small tufts of hair on the summits of his ears; and he is called the lion's guide, because the latter is said to be deficient in scent. But, when attended by the caracal, which has a very acute nose, he follows his prey, and rewards his conductor with a share; *Voyage d'Orient de Père Pluysier, Carme-dichongli*, liv. ii. p. 79.—The *gat el chailah*, *siyah gat*, or *harrah-kulok*, i. e. the black cat, or black eared cat, as the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish names signify, is of the highest and shape of a cat of the largest size. The body is of a reddish brown; the belly of a light colour, and sometimes spotted; the chops are black, the ears of a deep gray, with the tips of them distinguished by small tufts of black stiff hair, as is the lynx. The figure given of this animal by Charleton is not so tall in the chops as the Barbary *siyah-gat*; *Shaw's Travels*, p. 175. The figure given by Charleton does not represent the hair properly; and the head, which is bald, is deprived of its roundness. However, the *siyah-gat* of Charleton, and that of Barbary, mentioned by Dr. Shaw, belong to the same species with our caracal.

employment

employment of which he is naturally fond, and in which he is very successful, especially if he is never let loose upon any animal that is not his inferior in strength; for he loses courage, as soon as he perceives real danger. In India, he is employed for catching hares, rabbits, and even large birds, whom he surprises and seizes with singular address.

### S U P P L E M E N T.

I Mentioned under the article *caracal*, that the word *gat el-challab* signified *the black eared cat*. Mr. Bruce assures me that it means *the cat of the desert*. In that part of Nubia formerly called *the isle of Meroe*, he saw a caracal which differed in some respects from that of Barbary, of which we have given a figure. The face of the Nubian caracal is rounder, the ears black on the outside, but interspersed with silver-coloured hairs. He has the mule-crook on his withers, like most of the Barbary caracals. On the breast, belly, and inside of the thighs, there are small bright yellow spots, and not blackish brown, as in the Barbary caracal. These are only slight varieties, the number of which might be still augmented; for we find in Barbary, or rather in Lybia, near the ancient Capsa, a caracal with white, instead of black ears. The pencils of these white-eared caracals are thin, short, and black,

Plate CXXVI.



CARACAL.

PLATE CXXVII  
J. D. C. 1794



CARACAL of INDIA

Plate CXXVII



*A. Hall del.*

CARACAL of BENGAL.

black. They have a white tail, the extremity of which is surrounded with four black rings, and four black patches on the hind part of each leg, like the Nubian caracal. They are also smaller than the other caracals, not exceeding the size of a domestic cat. The ears are white within, and covered on the outside with bushy hair, of a lively red colour \*. If this difference in size were constant, it might be alledged, that there are two species of caracals in Barbary, the one large with black ears and long pencils; the other smaller, with white ears and very short pencils. It appears likewise, that these animals, which differ so greatly in their ears, are equally diversified in the form and length of the tail, as well as in the height of the legs; for Mr. Edwards has sent us the figure of a caracal from Bengal, whose tail and limbs are vastly longer than those of the common kind.

\* Note communicated by Mr. Bruce to M. de Buffon.