

## FOOTLESS HYAENA.

To THE EDITOR, *E.A. & Uganda Natural History Society Journal.*

Dear Sir,—

I am taking the liberty of submitting the enclosed photograph of a Hyaena, which was shot in the Naivasha district last September, as it exhibits certain points of interest. About the end of July, 1927, I had a calf mauled; it showed teeth marks only, and no claw marks. This appeared rather strange and rather a mystery until in September the original of the photograph put in an appearance and was "bagged." The animal was a well-nourished full-grown beast and exhibited the most extraordinary mutilation of the feet.

Practically the whole of the pads and all the toes were entirely missing and the right hind-foot was absent exposing the leg bone for some inches. The bone had become smooth with wear. How had the beast become mutilated? The only thing I can suggest is that the damage was done by fire. About the first week of June a Kuke hut was burnt and nearby a lot of papyrus was set afire too. The papyrus went on smouldering at the roots for ages, and the chances are that the hyaena passing that way scented some toothsome morsel amongst the ashes. In he went and got his toes burnt; he must then have got paniky and the further he floundered about the smouldering stuff, the more his extremities suffered, until they got properly burnt. Nature did the rest.

Can any of your readers put forward an alternative suggestion as to cause?

Yours truly,

B.

PLATE C.



Mutilated Hyaena.

## A PARROT TRAGEDY.

To THE EDITOR, *E.A. & Uganda Natural History Society Journal.*

Dear Sir,—

The following incidents may be of interest to members who study the bird life of the districts they live in.

A new forest station has lately been built at the Rongai River on the north slope of Kilimanjaro. The spot is at an altitude of 7,000 feet and close against high cedar forest.

The Forester, Mr. A. T. Reid, in occupation at Engare Rongai, is a keen naturalist and was particularly anxious to catch alive some specimens of the green forest parrot, of which there are large numbers all over this part of the mountain. His first success in securing a live bird was when he dropped an adult parrot at long range by a luck shot with No. 5. The bird was stunned but otherwise showed no signs of injury. In a fortnight this full-grown parrot had become perfectly tame and used to walk about at large. It became too tame in fact and allowed itself to be killed by a puppy.

Shortly after this Mr. Reid found a nest in a large cedar behind the house and used constantly to observe the movements of the parent birds. A Chagga boy used to ascend the tree, in itself no mean feat as the hole was at least 120 feet from the ground, and lower the three young parrots in a bag for inspection while the parent birds sat in the crown of the tree and uttered loud shrieks of protest. They never deserted the young ones however in spite of the latter having many times been lowered in full view of them.

Eventually the three young parrots were nearly fledged and Mr. Reid took them to the house and kept them in a box. He wrote as follows: "I got all three young ones safely from the nest and had them about a week. They were feeding nicely from a spoon. I put them outside in the sun. The parent birds came one day and fed them and before night time one died. Another died next day. I then set a trap with two cages and caught the parents alive, but the remaining young one died that afternoon and the parents next day. I think they poisoned the young ones when they saw they could not get them away and swallowed some of the poison themselves in their rage at being caught. The food they fed the young on was very tiny white seeds. I found the seeds on the bottom of the cage, but do not know what they are. I lost a nest-full of Goldfinches many years ago in the same manner by their parents feeding them and was told by an Italian bird fancier that the parents poisoned the young if they could not set them free."

Now I would like to hear some expression of opinion from ornithologists as to the probability of this poisoning being intentional. It is a pity the seeds were not kept and analysed.

Yours faithfully,

D. K. S. G.