CANIS (LUPUS) GRISEUS.—Rich.

AMERICAN GREY WOLF.

(Not figured.)

L. magnitudine canis lupi, cranio lato, gula caudaque villosis, pedibus latis, colore cinereo nigroque notato.

CHARACTERS.

About the size of the black and white wolves ; skull broad ; neck and tail covered with bushy hairs ; feet broad ; colour dark brindle grey.

SYNONYMES.

GREY WOLF.—Cook's Third Voyage, vol. ii., p. 293.

" " Lewis and Clarke, vol. i., pp. 206, 283.

COMMON GREY WOLF.—Schoolcraft's Travels, p. 285.

CANIS (LUPUS) GRISEUS.—Sabine, Franklin's Voy., p. 654.

" LUPUS.—Parry, First, Second, and Third Voyages.

" " Harlan, Fauna Americana, p. 81.

" " Godman, American Nat. Hist., vol. i., p. 255, fig. 1.

" (LUPUS) OCCIDENTALIS.—(Var. *a.*) LUPUS GRISEUS, Rich. Fauna Borealis Americana, p. 66.

" OCCIDENTALIS, Common American Wolf.—De Kay, Nat. Hist. of N. Y., p. 42, plate 27, fig. 2.

CANIS LUPUS.—Emory, Mass. Report, 1838, p. 26 ; 1840, p. 28.

LUPUS GIGAS.—Townsend, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci., Phila.

GIANT WOLF.—Col. G. A. McCall, U. S. A. (letter to Rev. John Bachman, see *infra*).

LOBO or LOVO.—Mexicans and Texans.

DESCRIPTION.

The American Grey Wolf bears a very striking resemblance to the European Wolf. There are, however, some differences which appear to be permanent, and which occur in all the varieties of American Wolves ; the body is generally more robust, the legs shorter, and the muzzle thicker and more obtuse in the latter.

We have examined a number of European Wolves (see vol. ii., p. 162, White American Wolf), and although there were great differences between various specimens, we were not able to satisfy ourselves that the American Wolf is the largest, as is supposed by RICHARDSON. We regard them as generally about the same size, and as exhibiting only *varieties*, not specific differences. The body of the American Grey Wolf is long, and rather gaunt; muzzle elongated, and somewhat thicker than that of the Pyrenean Wolf; head thick; nose long; ears erect and conical; eyes oblique—as is the case in all the true wolves—pupil of the eye circular; tail straight, and bushy. The animal does not curl it over the back, like a dog.

Behind the cheek there is a bunch of hairs, which look like a collar. The hairs are of two kinds, the longer coarse and rather rigid, the under fur soft and woolly; whiskers very few, and coarse and rigid; nails long, slightly arched, and, in the specimen from which we describe, considerably worn, as are also the teeth.

COLOUR.

The long hairs, from their roots, for one third of their length, are yellowish white, then a broad band of dark brown follows, succeeded by yellowish brown, and the tips are black. The under fur is ashy brown. On the under surface the long hairs are white nearly to the roots.

The general appearance of the upper surface is dark brindled grey, with an indistinct dorsal line a little darker than the colour of the sides.

The under parts are dull white.

Nostrils black; from the nose towards the eyes, reddish yellow. The outer surface of the ears, and outsides of hind legs, from the hip to the knee joint, are also reddish yellow. The whiskers are black.

DIMENSIONS.

	Feet.	Inches.
Length from point of nose to root of tail, - - - - -	4	
“ of tail (vertebræ), - - - - -	1	1
“ “ to end of hair, - - - - -	1	5
Height of ear, - - - - -		4
Breadth “ - - - - -		3
From point of nose to end of skull, - - - - -		11½
“ eye to point of nose, - - - - -		5
“ shoulder to longest nail, - - - - -	2	4
Longest upper canine tooth, - - - - -		1½
Length of the hair on the back, 3 to 4 inches.		

The above description and measurements were taken from a specimen in the possession of our distinguished friend, Prof. KIRTLAND, of Cleveland, Ohio. The animal was killed in February, and was, of course, in full winter pelage.

HABITS.

We have given the general habits of the wolves in our second volume (see pp. 126, 156, 240), and now will favour our readers with the following letter from Col. GEO. A. MCCALL, U. S. A., which will be found very interesting. It will be perceived that the Colonel thinks the Giant Wolf, or Lobo, a distinct species. We have, however, thought it best to give Mr. TOWNSEND'S name (*L. Gigas*) as a synonyme; and we have also appended to our list of names for the grey wolf, the common one of *Lobo*, or *Lovo*, used by the Mexicans and Texans, although it has been thought by some naturalists that the *Lobo* was a distinct species from any other wolf, and by the Mexican Rancheros it is described as tawny, and with a head like that of a lion.

"The Rev. JOHN BACHMAN, D. D. :

"Dear Sir,—On meeting you in Philadelphia, a few days ago—at which time I passed a most agreeable evening, in company with yourself and other distinguished naturalists, whom your arrival had brought together—you related to us in glowing language a variety of anecdotes, illustrative of the character and habits of different families of our Fauna; and, in the course of conversation, you inquired whether I had met, in the west, the *Giant Wolf* of N. America. I then mentioned some incidents, which occurred at Fort Gibson several years ago, exemplifying the greater fleetness, power of endurance, and courage of this species, when compared with the common wolf. As you were pleased to pronounce the 'long yarn' worth re-spinning, I, herewith, agreeably to your request, give you my reminiscence of the facts.

"The position of Fort Gibson is, as you are probably aware, near the junction of the Neosho with the Arkansas river; here, in the angle thus formed, is a prairie of some extent, which used to furnish, for the amusement of those who were fond of the *course* with greyhounds, at any time, a *start* of a prairie wolf (*L. Latrans*), not unfrequently a common wolf (*L. Occidentalis*), and, now and then, the giant wolf himself (*L. Gigas*). The last was easily recognised, even at a distance, by his shyness and his fleetness; and, as he was generally upon the lookout, it seemed impossible for two or three horsemen, with half a dozen greyhounds, to approach

within half a mile of him before he showed a straight tail ; and then his great speed always enabled him to reach cover before the dogs, notwithstanding that two or three of them were of high blood and great fleetness, could overcome the gap which, at the start, separated them from the chase ; and thus the sportsmen, after several killing rides, had always found themselves foiled by the watchfulness and the superior speed and bottom of this wolf.

“After a hard and unsuccessful race of this kind, several officers were one day returning home, when in passing the farm of a Cherokee Indian, they were told by him that a wolf of this description was in the habit of frequenting the grounds about his house, almost nightly ; that he had committed numerous depredations, but that such was his cunning that he had eluded all efforts to kill or capture him. Being assured that a fresh trail might be struck at this point, any morning at daylight, the officers determined to try the fellow’s bottom with the fox-hounds. Accordingly, a few nights afterwards—the moon having risen about one o’clock—a party was in the saddle, as soon as they could see upon the prairie, and on their way to the Cherokee’s house, which was about seven miles from the Fort. They proceeded leisurely, and reached their destination about three o’clock, purposing to let their horses and dogs rest until daylight, before entering on the chase : the pack, I should mention, consisting of half a dozen fox-hounds, and two or three half-curs, the latter being fleet and more courageous than the former. It so happened, however, that the dogs, not being coupled, struck the trail close to the house, just as they arrived ; and away they went with a cry, and at a pace which showed that the giant was right before them. For some time the wolf kept within the narrow strip of covert which borders the Bayou Menard, and thus the horsemen were enabled, by a good moonlight, to keep parallel with him on the open plain. But the wolf finding at length that the cover afforded him no security from his pursuers, and trusting to the lightness of his heels, dashed boldly into the prairie, and made a straight course for the hills on the opposite side, at the distance of about three miles. Here he again took cover ; but he was not allowed much time for repose, as the dogs were soon upon him, and the covert which here bordered the Neosho, being like that of the Bayou, narrow, he was soon forced to leave it and the hills, and again take to the plain. In this way the wolf made several bold dashes, running from one cover to another in a straight course of from one to three miles over the plain ; and it was not until half past eight o’clock, A. M., that he was brought to bay. The *denouement* was brought about in this way : the wolf was at last drawing near to cover after one of the open dashes I have mentioned—his speed, to be sure, much

abated, and the hounds and horsemen within sight, behind him—when he entered a large field that lay between him and the thicket he wished to gain. The field he soon crossed ; and a good cover, with running water, was within a few yards of him. He knew the grounds well ; but he did not calculate accurately the amount of strength necessary to clear the fence, which here was much higher than on the side where he had entered. Without pause, therefore, he boldly dashed at the obstacle which now alone separated him from all he stood so much in need of ; but as he made the leap his head struck the topmost rail, and he rolled backwards, heavily, upon the ground. Here a shout of triumph from the hunters, who were within view and had witnessed his fall, broke upon his ear ; and now he aroused all his remaining energies for one prodigious effort to effect his escape ; nature, however, was too nearly exhausted to meet the call, and he fell prostrate upon the ground. Horses and hounds were the next moment closing around him, he gained the fence corner, and then turned upon his pursuers.

“ A desperate fight ensued—one or two large and powerful half-hound half-cur dogs, in quick succession, rolled away before him, as he dashed against them with his heavy chest and shoulders. Time after time they returned to the charge, for the dogs had their mettle well aroused and were confident of victory, although each moment seemed to diminish the chances in their favour. With each successive round, dog after dog recoiled more or less injured by a quick and violent snap of the giant's jaws—here, on the right, sat a poor, inoffensive looking hound, whose excitement had led him into the depth of a contest for which nature had never intended him, now writhing in agony, and howling most piteously, his long twisted ears drooping lower than ever, while he cast a furtive glance at his lacerated back and shoulders, just released from the jaws of the giant wolf—there, on the left, lay sprawling, another, whose case seemed even more hopeless than the first.

“ During the *melée* several pistols had been drawn, to despatch the wolf and save the dogs ; but such was the intricacy of the affair, such the incessant change of position of the combatants, constantly interlocked, that the chances of killing the dogs by a shot were greater than of saving them ; and this continued until dogs and wolf, both, were exhausted, when the latter was knocked on the head with a heavy club. And thus fell the giant wolf, after a run of five hours and a half.

“ In this description I have gone much into detail ; but my only desire was to illustrate what I fully believe to be the fact, viz. that the strength, fleetness, and endurance of this wolf are much greater than those of the common wolf, which was never known, in that country, to make anything

like such a run as did this fellow. Indeed, it is only necessary to look at the large leg bone, the strong back, the deep shoulder, and broad chest of this wolf, to be satisfied of his superiority to the other, in the qualities I have enumerated. I am also inclined to think that he is more resolute, and not so easily cowed as the other species ; and in support of this opinion, I proceed to the adventure that occurred to Lieut. HOSKINS, with one of this species.

"A few weeks after this, Lieutenant CHAS. HOSKINS, of the 4th Regt. of Infantry, who, being a bold rider and an ardent hunter, was one of the chief actors in the scene I have just described, had a severe encounter with a giant wolf, which I will endeavour to relate as he described it to me.

"He had mounted his horse just before sunset, one day in June, to breathe for an hour, the fresher air of the prairie, and had ridden at a leisurely pace about three quarters of a mile from the fort—his dogs, four or five greyhounds, were following listlessly at his heels, dreaming as little as himself of seeing a wolf—when on a sudden, from a small clump of shumach bushes, immediately at his side, there sprang an enormous giant wolf. By one of those instinctive impulses which it is difficult to describe, horse and dogs were launched upon him before an eye could twinkle. The wolf had but a few yards the start ; and under such circumstances, although the fleetest of his congeners, he stood no chance of escaping from his still fleetier enemies ; in fact, before he had run fifty yards he was caught by the flanks and stopped. Here a most furious fight commenced : it is a well known fact that the greyhound is sometimes a severe fighter, owing to his great activity and his quick, slashing snap, and HOSKINS's dogs were, in addition, in the habit of coursing the prairie-wolf during the fall and winter months, on which occasions the affair was very generally, after a short chase, terminated in about one minute, by the victim having his throat and bowels torn into ribands. This, however, was a different affair ; they had encountered an ugly customer, and the battle was long and of varied aspect. Sometimes the wolf would break entirely clear from the dogs, leaving several of them floored ; again, however, within a few yards he would be checked, and the battle be resumed ; so that during a long struggle there was little change of ground.

"The fight was continued in this way, the prospect of victory or of defeat frequently changing, until both parties were quite exhausted.

"And now, here lay the wolf in the centre, with his tongue hanging from his jaws ; and at the distance of a few feet, the dogs around him, bleeding and panting for breath. At this juncture, HOSKINS, who had not even a penknife in his pocket, was unable to terminate the affair ; he sat

upon his horse, a silent and admiring spectator of the strange scene. At length, when he thought his dogs had somewhat recovered their breath, he called on them to return to the charge. Old *Cleon*, a black dog of great strength and courage, was the only one who obeyed the summons—he sprang fiercely at the wolf's throat; the latter, however, who had risen to his feet, by a well timed snap, seized *Cleon* by the neck and hind head, and retaining his hold, was grinding away on the poor fellow's skull with his immense jaws. This was too much for any hunter to witness—a favourite dog held helpless, in a grip that threatened very speedily to end his days. *HOSKINS* was an experienced hunter, and a very cool and determined man—poor fellow, he afterwards fell, fighting most gallantly, at the battle of Monterey, Mexico: on this occasion he sprang from his horse and seized the wolf by the hind leg, and by a violent jerk caused him to release the dog, but only to find, in less than an instant, the jaws of the monster clamped upon his own leg. He told me, the following day, that he plainly felt the jar as the wolf's large canine teeth clashed against each other in the calf of his leg, so powerful was the snap of his jaws.

"The wolf, however, made no effort to shake or lacerate the wound; at the same time it occurred to the hunter that this would be the only effect of any exertion on his own part to extricate his limb; and therefore, with the wolf's hind leg in his right hand, and his left leg in the wolf's jaws, he stood perfectly quiet, while poor *Cleon*, whose head was covered with blood, lay before him, apparently more dead than alive.

"In a moment, however, *Cleon* recovered and raised his head; and then his master spoke to him again. Promptly the old fellow obeyed the call, and this time he made good his hold upon the wolf's throat; whereupon our hunter's leg was at once released. The other dogs now, having pretty well recovered their breath, also re-attacked the wolf; and this round so disabled him that the affair might be considered as decided. The dogs, however, had all been severely handled, and were again so completely blown that they were unable to make an end of the combat by killing him outright. At this juncture a Cherokee boy, who was on his way across the plain, came up; but neither had he a knife nor any other weapon. *HOSKINS* then, as his only resource, unbuckled the reins of his bridle (his horse, well used to such scenes, was quietly feeding, close by), and making of these a slip-noose, he, with the assistance of the boy, got this over the wolf's head, when pulling on the opposite ends, they succeeded in strangling the already exhausted animal. After resting with his dogs a little while, *HOSKINS* was enabled to mount his horse and return home, with all of them except poor *Cleon*, who was so much

exhausted as to be unable to keep his legs. A light wagon was immediately sent out for him, and the old dog was received at the fort in triumph, together with the body of his vanquished adversary. He was, nevertheless, laid up in hospital for several days, as was his master, whose leg became inflamed, and prevented his mounting his horse again for a fortnight.

"The next morning I saw the wolf hanging by the heels, at the front of the piazza of HOSKINS'S quarters ; and he was, beyond all comparison, the largest wolf that I ever laid eyes upon. His dimensions were taken at the time ; but I have no memoranda, and I will not venture to speak from memory.

"The colour and general appearance, however, of these two specimens (the skins of which were preserved) were, I very well recollect, alike ; viz. a mixture of rusty black and grey about the head, back, and flanks, interspersed with a yellowish rusty brown. But the striking marks of distinction were the large size and the breadth of the head, and the smallness of the tail, when compared with other species ; the tail was decidedly short and scant of hair : the head was very remarkable—I speak of it as I saw it in the flesh—the front view, taking in what would be included within a line, drawn between the ears, and two others from those to the point of the nose, presented very nearly an equilateral triangle ; the head of the common wolf being much more ovate. Had the skull been stripped of its integuments, I doubt not it would have shown, to a certain degree, a corresponding enlargement in the occipital region.

"I feel no hesitation in asserting that these wolves were of the species recently described by Mr. TOWNSEND as *L. Gigas* ; for I did not at the time, nor have I at any time since, entertained in my own mind a doubt of this wolf being a distinct species.

"Without instituting any strict inquiry, from personal examination, as to species or varieties, I have seen a good deal of the wolves of the west during some years past, and from a difference I have observed in the manners or character of those I have met with in the field, I incline to the belief that an additional species, between *L. Occidentalis* and *L. Latrans*, will yet be satisfactorily established.

"G. A. M."

PHILADELPHIA, *July*, 1851.

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