

I WISH I COULD MEET
EVERY WOMAN FACE
TO FACE! I'D SAY
"IF YOU WANT TO
SAVE CLOTHES AND
COUPONS USE RINSO
EVERY WASHDAY!"



LEVER BROTHERS (N.Z.) LIMITED—PETONE Z 52. 52 Z

A SCREEN STAR NEVER TAKES
CHANCES WITH COMPLEXION
BEAUTY. I LOVE MY DAILY
LUX TOILET SOAP BATH.



Joan Bennett
A 20th CENTURY
FOX STAR IN "GIRL TROUBLE"

LUX
TOILET SOAP
COSTS SO LITTLE...
LASTS SO LONG.



LEVER BROTHERS (N.Z.) LIMITED—PETONE

LT. 52. 52 Z.



The household drudge. She also feeds the baby

WHY, I asked myself, a week or so ago, are you jibbing at the monkeys? How is it you go to the Zoo six times and still put off the day when you will give your attention to the apes and the baboons and the monkeys—the thumbled and unthumbled, the snout-nosed and flat-nosed, the small-eared and the big-eared, the short-tailed and the long-tailed?

Well, I have to admit to myself, it's because I'm not fond of seeing caricatures of myself; I don't like looking into a cage and seeing someone who looks extraordinarily like Aunt Isobel sitting in a corner peeling carrots; I don't like giving food to someone who takes it in a slightly grubby hand and smells it before he eats it; and I don't like the way they all scratch all the time—even though I know perfectly well it is salt and not vermin that fascinates them.

BUT at last I overcame my reluctance, largely because the Curator's wife answered without hesitation, "The spider monkeys," when I asked her which animals were her favourites in the Zoo. I went to see the spider monkeys—and the others—and I quite agree with the Curator's wife that those at least are charming.

These creatures from South and Central America are notable among the monkey tribes for the absence of thumbs on their hands and the possession of long prehensile tails. The varieties at the Zoo are the black-faced and the grizzled, and they range in colour from fawn to a brilliant chestnut. The public may not feed them, as they are easily upset if their regular diet is interrupted. All the other monkeys and baboons and such creatures in the Zoo may be, and are, fed as often as there are visitors to hand out bread, peanuts, cake, and buns.

For a long time, I stood watching the dancing activities of the spider monkeys, who climbed five-legged about the cages, clinging to the wires with their four-toed feet, four-fingered hands, and the sinuous tail with a tip that curled upon itself till it looked like a fern-frond. Sometimes a female would wrap her tail round her head, coronet-fashion; at other times she would cling with feet and tail tip, and busy herself with her hands hunting for salt—or whatever it is. In the meantime

THEY ARE TOO MUCH LIKE US

the male sunned himself harvester-style with his arms outflung, while the females examined him for salt—or whatever it is.

The baby spider monkey, the insides of her hands still slightly pink with youth, her finger-nails still distinct and not a bone-mass as in her elders, her little white teeth still clearly human in shape and arrangement—the canines not yet grown long and un-human-like—put out her oval pink tongue and licked my finger—and only a six-months' old human baby could have a tongue as soft as that was. A sweet little monkey; one that makes it far from surprising to hear that the Curator receives letters by the dozen from children asking for monkeys bred at the Zoo. I saw one of the letters: "I would be willing to pay a fair price for such an animal that suited my requirements," it stated in business-like tones. The writer was in Standard Five.

I TORE myself away from the spider monkeys and passed with scarcely a pause to watch the silver gibbon, the smallest of the man-like apes and the only one to walk upright by habit. He was attractive enough, I suppose, but too much like certain relatives and friends of mine for me to be able to watch him for long in comfort. A surly fellow at close quarters, I have no doubt.

I hurried on. And for much too long for my own enjoyment I stood watching and feeding the sacred baboons. It was perfectly simple to feed the sacred baboon himself; but to feed his wife called for ingenuity; and to feed his son called for speed of movement and sleight-of-hand if I hoped to escape with my gloves, bag, pencil, etc. The young one was separated from his parents—all because of the jealousy and maybe a sort of incipient Oedipus complex, though I'm not very sure about this. He behaved like a thoroughly bad child over my first pencil, and screamed for the second one after he had chewed and spat out the wood of the first. He is old enough to have a strong mind on the subject of younger brothers or sisters, any of which he would quickly kill if he happened to be within tearing distance of them. When he snatched my pencil the keeper asked him politely to give it back, so he sat in a corner and roared and screamed—if you remember the most screaming child you have ever seen or heard you will be able to imagine the bad-tempered din that went on. His close-set eyes, like his mother's and father's, moved rapidly here and there, watching for what he could grab and watching to see if he was being watched. A guilty look he wore; or perhaps I read on to his face a look which I arbitrarily named guilty. Anyway I didn't like the look and I don't think he'd greet me with any friendliness another day—in spite of the buns and the pencil.

"Why should these things be called sacred baboons?" I asked the keeper, looking at their most hideous behinds, bare of hair and bulging with huge red callosities specially provided so that they may sit in comfort on the red-hot rocks



"Gimme, gimme, gimme!"

by the Red Sea. He told me that they are held in high regard throughout Africa. H'm. I noticed that Mrs. B. sat hunched in the background most of the time, chipping away at a carrot, furtive eyes on the Boss. And the Boss guzzled away at the bread with the most shocking table manners. (Oh, no, much worse than just eating with his mouth open. I tell you he had no consideration for others at all.) I managed to give the household drudge a bit of bread in the end when the keeper lured the Boss away to the other side of the pen for a specially large bun. And the household drudge grabbed with one hand and kept the other on the ground ready to make a quick getaway on all fours if the Boss indicated that this would be a good idea. Yes, they walk on all fours, but are more ungainly than dogs or pigs. And they sit to eat—or peel carrots, or nurse the baby.

WAS I impressed with the sacred baboons? No sir. And yet the Curator told me a most persuasive tale of their high social organisation—of how in early days of settlement in parts of Africa armies of them would descend in formation upon a farm and strip the fields bare; of how the husbands demand absolute faithfulness from their wives (Yes, I asked if the wives demand, too, but the Curator didn't answer); and of how, in times of danger, the males shepherd the females into a ring and fight to protect them. I'm sorry, but I'm not convinced about this high social organisation. You can't have a "high social organisation" composed of bullies on the one hand and household drudges on the other.

WELL, I went around the monkeys—the Bengal monkeys and the Burma crab-eating monkey (with his little finger poised in the air) and all the other monkeys who stretch out their human hands for apples and bread and bananas so stretchingly that they might be small boys saying "Gimme, gimme, gimme," and who either rudely smell the buns you so kindly give them or run screaming with them to a safe place at the top of a cage away from their brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles—who so easily might be your own brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles—and on the whole, with a few exceptions, I really do not like monkeys.

—J.