

## CHAPTER SIX

### FEEDING

THE feeding behaviour of the naked ape appears at first sight to be one of his most variable, opportunistic, and culturally susceptible activities, but even here there are a number of basic biological principles at work. We have already taken a close look at the way his ancestral fruit-picking patterns had to become modified into co-operative prey-killing. We have seen how this led to a number of fundamental changes in his feeding routine. Food-seeking had to become more elaborate and carefully organised. The urge to kill prey had to become partially independent of the urge to eat. Food was taken to a fixed home base for consumption. Greater food preparation had to be carried out. Meals became larger and more spaced out in time. The meat component of the diet became dramatically increased. Food storage and food sharing was practised. Food had to be provided by the males for their family units. Defecation activities had to be controlled and modified.

All these changes were taking place over a very long period of time, and it is significant that, despite the great technological advances of recent years, we are still faithful to them. It would seem that they are rather more than mere cultural devices, to be buffeted this way and that by the whims of fashion. Judging by our present-day behaviour, they must, to some extent at any rate, have become deep-seated biological characteristics of our species.

As we have already noted, the improved foodcollecting techniques of modern agriculture have left the majority of the adult males in our societies without a hunting role. They compensate for this by going out to 'work'. Working has replaced hunting, but has retained many of its basic characteristics. It involves a regular trip from the home base to the 'hunting'