

the night, but the contrast is nevertheless a striking one. The static food is always there, just waiting to be plucked and eaten. All that is necessary is for the animals to move from one feeding-place to another, as their tastes change, or as the fruits come in and out of season. No food storage takes place except, in a very temporary way, in the bulging cheek pouches of certain monkeys.

The faeces are less smelly than those of the meateaters and no special behaviour has developed to deal with their disposal, since they drop down out of the trees and away from the animals. As the group is always on the move, there is little danger of a particular area becoming unduly fouled or smelly. Even the great apes that bed down in special sleeping-nests make a new bed at a new site each night, so that there is little need to worry about nest sanitation. (All the same, it is rather surprising to discover that 99 per cent of abandoned gorilla nests in one area of Africa had gorilla dung inside them, and that in 73 per cent the animals had actually been lying in it. This is bound to constitute a disease risk by increasing the chances of re-infection, and is a remarkable illustration of the basic faecal disinterest of primates.)

Because of the static nature and abundance of the food, there is no need for the primate group to split up to search for it. They can move, flee, rest and sleep together in a close-knit community, with every member keeping an eye on the movements and actions of every other. Each individual of the group will at any one moment have a reasonably good idea of what everyone else is doing. This is a very non-carnivore procedure. Even in those species of primates that do split up from time to time, the smaller unit is never composed of a single individual. A solitary monkey or ape is a vulnerable creature. It lacks the powerful natural weapons of the carnivore and in isolation falls easy prey to the stalking killers.

The co-operative spirit that is present in such packhunters as wolves is largely absent from the world of the primate. Competitiveness and dominance is the order of his day. Competition in the social hierarchy is, of course, present in both groups, but it is less