

Monkeyland.

(The Rev. John Isabele, F.E.S.)

The gorilla claims to be the rightful king of the monkeys. Three pretenders, it is true, dispute his right, all three like himself being distinguished by the absence of a tail. The orang pleads that it has a better brain, the chimpanzee points out that it has a thinner skull, and the gibbon boasts of a more shapely chest. But the King of the Castle is surely he who can hold his ground against

The male gorilla measures, commonly, over five feet six inches in height, and sometimes reaches six feet. He has an exceedingly massive skeleton, and a large body, powerful, projecting jaws with enormous canine teeth, long muscular arms, and a chest which any athlete might envy. Altogether a gentleman not to be trifled with, seeing that, in addition to his physical gifts, he is brave and even fierce. His mate is much smaller and less rugged in appearance, and has a shorter bridge to her nose, a longer upper lip, and

sometimes under provocation, the stiff hairs on his head stand upright. His voice when angry is a deep roar.

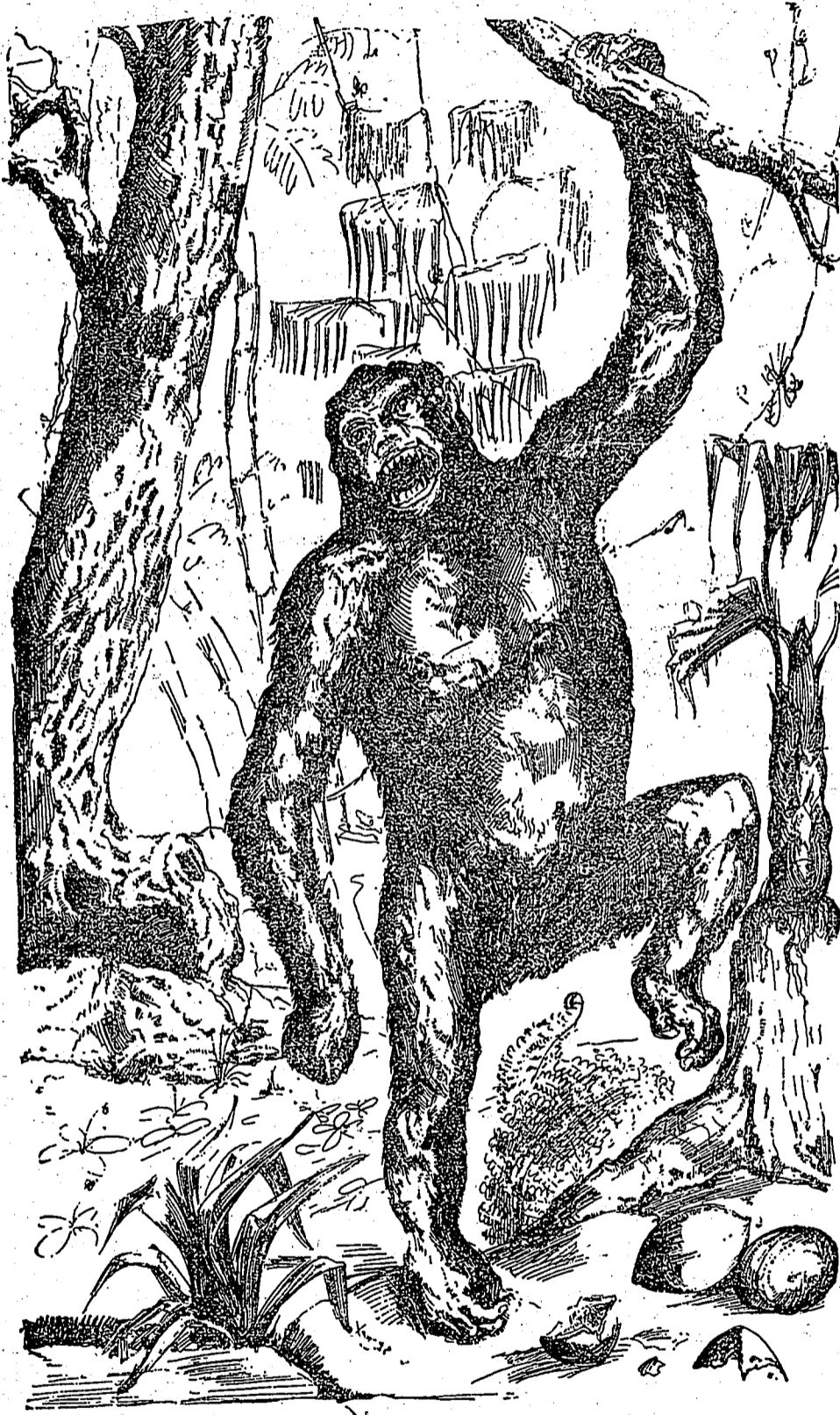
The gorilla is, so to speak, a family man. It is difficult to give many details about his life, for he is naturally of a retiring disposition; but as far as can be ascertained, he appears to travel about in company with his wife and children, continually 'moving on' as the supply of food becomes exhausted. There is a rumor—let us hope it is a libel—which says that sometimes he has two wives at the same time. He is for the most part a vegetarian, although by no means a bigoted one, relieving the comparative insipidity of palm-cabbage, plums, and nuts, with an occasional dish of the flesh of birds, small mammals, and of bird's eggs. It is reported that sometimes he so far forgets himself as to procure his vegetables without permission and without payment from the nearest garden. If this be true, it shows clearly that even gorillas do not always carry on business on sound principles.

The gorilla is, for the most part, an inhabitant of the forest, but, although an active climber, prefers usually to remain on the solid ground. Leaping from tree to tree from morning till night is all very well for monkeys whose dispositions are frivolous, and whose bodies are light, but the gorilla is a grave being, taking life very seriously, and is too portly and dignified to be enamored of mere restlessness. Imagine a solid alderman turning somersaults on the horizontal bar! The thing is absurd. If the gorilla wishes to procure some nuts for breakfast, he naturally goes where the nuts are to be found, that is, up the trees, but he has the good sense to come down again when he has secured the nuts.

Like a sensible being, the gorilla works for his living by day, and rests by night. It is said that a kind of bed is made up for the mother and children on a tree out of reach of prowling beasts, and, when his family are comfortably tucked in, the good father sits on the ground with his back against the tree keeping guard. Few animals attempt to break into his well ventilated apartments upstairs, for the old gentleman's arms are long, and his teeth strong, and he does not scruple to inflict instant capital punishment upon burglars. Whether the gorilla loves a fight or not, I cannot say. Anyhow, he is courageous enough to face any foe in defence of his family; and, when brought to bay, is, by common consent, a most dangerous enemy. But he prefers peace, if he can have it with honor, and is more inclined to use his big teeth cracking nuts, than in crunching the bones of man or beast. It cannot be denied that among the gentlemen gorillas duels are sometimes fought; and, sad to say, the quarrel is generally about some lady. But this is a subject too delicate and painful to be pursued.

If attacked by day or night the gorilla turns his face to the foe, but the only credit he receives for his bravery is to be called by most writers a hideous monster. A man who defends his wife and children is a hero; a gorilla who does the same is a ferocious brute.

It would be a marvel if the gorilla showed much amiability to the human race seeing that man, whether African or European, seizes every opportunity of killing him by primitive hunting traps and by breech-loading rifles. The African, at all events, has been inspired by the gorilla with a salutary respect and even dread. He does not care to openly attack the animal, and his common method of taking it is to suspend a weighted



A GORILLA.

all comers, Carlyle's able man; and in stature, bulk and strength, combined with brain power, the gorilla stands supreme. The pretenders may murmur in his absence, but in his presence no monkey, with or without a tail, dares to assert himself. He is the King—Gorilla Augustus!

As is natural in a black king, the gorilla reigns in the land of Ham, making his home in Western Equatorial Africa, between the Cameroon and Congo rivers.

less projecting teeth. She is usually considered to have a greater share of personal beauty than her husband, but is undoubtedly 'the weaker vessel.'

The skin of the gorilla is deep black, and his shaggy coat is of iron-grey with often a touch of brown.

The black face and hands are uncovered. The face has a very poor crop of whiskers, but there is a distinct beard under the chin. When the gorilla loses his temper, as he does