The writer is a zoologist. He is studying the behaviour of monkeys in West Africa, including baboons, Drill monkeys, Putty-Nosed monkeys and Red-Eared Guenons.

One day a man walked into the camp, preceded on a length of rope by a three parts grown baboon. Young though the baboon was, he was at least three times as big as the largest Drill monkey. Apart from his great size he had a shaggy coat of yellowish fur, huge teeth, and a long sweeping, lion-like tail. I called this baboon George. He turned out to be gentle and kind to the other monkeys, without allowing them to take any liberties.

George, owing to the fact that he was so tame, was a great favourite with the staff, and spent much of his time in the kitchen. This, however, I had to put a stop to as he was used as an excuse for almost anything that happened: if dinner was late, George had upset the frying-pan; if something was missed there were always at least three witnesses to the fact that George had been seen with it last. So in the end George was tethered among the other monkeys and accepted the leadership without letting it go to his head. In this respect he was most unusual, for almost any monkey, if he sees that all the others respect and are afraid of him, will turn into the most disgusting bully. He also did something that astonished not only his fellow-monkeys, but the staff as well. Thinking that he would show the same respect for the lizards as the other monkeys did, I tied him with a fairly long leash, and his first action was to walk to the full extent of it, reach out a black paw, snatch a lizard off its branch, and proceed to eat it with every sign of enjoyment. I hastily shortened his leash.

The Red-eared Guenon was the most delightful of the monkeys. About the size of a small cat, she was a delicate green-yellow colour on her body, with yellow patches on her cheeks, a fringe of russet hair hiding her ears, and on her nose a large heart-shaped patch of red hair. Her limbs were slender, and she had great thin bony fingers, like a very old man's. Every day the monkeys had a handful of grasshoppers each, and the Red-eared Guenon, when she saw me coming, would stand up on her hind legs, uttering shrill bird-like twitterings, and holding out her long arms beseechingly, her thin fingers trembling. She would fill her mouth and both hands with grasshoppers, and when the last insect had been scrunched she would carefully examine the front and back of her hands to make sure she had not missed one, and then would search the ground all round, an intense expression in her light brown eyes. She was the most gentle monkey I had ever come across, and even her cries were this delicate bird-like twittering, and a long drawn-out "wheeeeeeeep" when she was trying to attract one's attention, so different from the belching grunts and loud, unruly screams of the Drill monkeys, or the tinny screech of the Putty-noses. George seemed to share my liking for this Guenon, and she seemed to find comfort in being near to his massive body. Peering from behind his shaggy shoulders she would even pluck up the courage to make faces at the Drills.

At night the monkeys were untied from their stakes, given a drink of milk with vitamins in it, and then tied inside a special small hut I had built for them, next door to my tent. The nearer they were to me at night the safer I felt, for I never knew when a local leopard might fancy monkey for his nightly feed, and tied out in the middle of the compound they would not stand a chance. So, each night the monkeys would be carried to their house, dripping milk, and screaming because they did not want to go to bed.

One night George revolted. After they had all been put to bed, and I had had my supper, I went down to a dance in the village. George must have watched me going through a crack in his bedroom wall, and he decided that if I could spend an evening out he would also. Very carefully he unpicked his tether and quietly eased his way through the palm-leaf wall. Then he slipped across the compound, and was just gaining the path when the night watchman saw him.

The night watchman uttered a wild cry, seized a banana and rushed forward to try and tempt him back. George paused and watched his approach. He let him get within a foot or so of his trailing leash, then he ran forward, bit the poor man in the calf of the leg, and fled down the path towards the village, leaving the night watchman standing on one leg and screaming. On reaching the village George was surprised to see so many people gathered around an oil lamp. Just as he arrived the band struck up, and the crowd broke into a shuffling, swaying dance.

George watched them for a moment, astonished, and then decided that this was a very superior game which had been arranged for his special benefit. Uttering a loud scream he rushed into the circle of dancers, his trailing rope tripping several couples up, and then he proceeded to leap and scream in the centre of the circle, occasionally making a rush at a passing dancer. Then he overturned the oil lamp which promptly went out. Scared of the dark and the pandemonium his sudden appearance had caused, he rushed to the nearest person and clung to his legs, screaming with all his might.

Eventually when the lamp was relit, George was chastised and seated on my knee, where he behaved very well, taking sips out of my glass when I wasn't looking, and watching the dancers with an absorbed expression. The dancers, keeping a wary eye on him, once more formed a circle. Presently I called for a small drum and, putting George on the ground, I gave the instrument to him. He had been watching the band with great attention and knew just what to do. He squatted there showing his great canines in a huge grin of delight, beating the drum with all his might. Unfortunately his sense of rhythm was not as good as the other drummers and his erratic playing threw the dancers into confusion once again, so I was forced to take the drum away from him and send him off to bed, protesting loudly all the way.