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BUSHMAN SHARES A CAGE WITH BRONX PARK APES

Some Laugh Over His Antics, but Many Are Not Pleased.

KEEPER FREES HIM AT TIMES

Then, with Bow and Arrow, the Pygmy from the Congo Takes to the Woods.

There was an exhibition at the Zoological Park, in the Bronx, yesterday which had for many of the visitors something more than a provocation to laughter. There were laughs enough in it, too, but there was something about it which made the serious minded grave. Even those who laughed the most turned away with an expression on their faces such as one sees after a play with a sad ending or a book in which the hero or heroine is poorly rewarded.

"Something about it that I don't like," was the way one man put it.

The exhibition was that of a human being in a monkey cage. The human being happened to be a bushman, one of a race that scientists do not rate high in the human scale, but to the average non-scientific person in the crowd of sightseers there was something about the display that was unpleasant.

The human being caged was the little black man, Ota Benga, whom Prof. S. P. Verner, the explorer, recently brought to this country from the Jungles of Central Africa. Prof. Verner lately handed him over to the New York Zoological Society for care and keeping. When he was permitted yesterday to get out of his cage, a keeper constantly kept his eyes on him. Benga appears to like his keeper, too. It is probably a good thing that Benga doesn't think very deeply. If he did it isn't likely that he was very produ [sic] of himself when he woke in the morning and found himself under the same roof with the orang-outangs and monkeys for that is where he really is.

The news that the pigmy would be on exhibition augmented the Saturday afternoon crowd at the Zoological Park yesterday, which becomes somewhat smaller as the Summer wanes. The monkey – or rather, the primate-house is in the centre of Director Hornaday's animal family.

To make the lives of the orang outangs more interesting, their antics plainer to the view of the visitors, an iron cage has been built at the southern end of the primate house. In the cool days of last week the chimpanzees avoided this open cage. They are very sensitive to cold, and preferred to crawl under the straw in the interior of the monkey house.

Like his fellow-lodgers, the orang outangs and monkeys, Benga has a room inside the building. It opens, like the rest, into the public cage. A crowd that fluctuated between 300 and 500 persons watched the little black man amuse himself in his own way yesterday. He doesn't like crowds, especially the children, who tease him. So he wove at the hammocks and mats which he knows how to make, jabbered at the parrot which came from the jungles with him, and shot at marks in the ample cage with his bow and arrow. For the latter diversion the Zoological Park managers had made provision by tying bundles of straw against a side of the inclosure. The children got a good deal of fun out of his arrow-shooting when he missed his mark which was not often. Then he made faces at them.

A little after the noon hour Benga was allowed to go into the woods. A keeper watched him from a distance. It is doubtful if any one has ever seen a happier mortal. Grabbing his bow and arrow, he jumped into the thickest of the underbrush and frisked about.

At liberty Benga seemed to live in Africa again. He peered into every hollow tree and looked at trees and shrubs for birds and squirrels. But the crowd soon found him and he had to move from spot to spot. In the end the keeper had to send him back into the monkey house again. But it was hard to keep him there. Frequently he appeared at the door, and in looks not hard to understand let the keepers know that he would rather be among the trees and shrubs. Released again, he walked toward the restaurant. The keepers followed. It then appeared that Benga has acquired one civilized habit since he reached here. He loves soda.

The soda was paid for by Benga with money that he got from the Bronx Park photographer for whom he sat for his likeness.

There was been no attempt to make Benga look grotesque. He wears white trousers and a khaki coat. Only his feet are bare.