

FIGHT BETWEEN A SQUIRREL AND A SNAKE.

THE Cincinnati 'Enquirer' of May 1, says:—A recent ignominious defeat of a ferocious young lioness by a humble and ugly donkey in our Zoological Garden has a curious parallel in the result of a deadly combat on Wednesday evening between a large diamond rattlesnake and a little squirrel in a snake exhibition, at 522 Vine street. The snake was one of the largest of its species, six and a-half feet in length, and having been without food for months, was inclined to act on the offensive; the squirrel was inexperienced in serpent warfare, but wonderfully plucky. When the squirrel had been placed in the cage, the slimy, shining monster immediately sprang his rattle and coiled to strike, while the squirrel, having taken a good look all around the cage, and found escape impossible, prepared himself for the worst, watching his glittering enemy with fierce resolution. The spectacle became interesting to the spectators, for the deadly ophidian was contending with a far higher form of life, a finer organism, a more intelligent being than the helpless creatures which ordinarily supplied him with food. Snake and squirrel alike poised themselves for the spring, the tail of the former vibrating so rapidly as to become almost invisible, and emitting a sound like the buzz of brazen clock-work; the tail of the latter trembling slightly, very slightly, with the tension of the squirrel's muscles. Suddenly a sickly gleam of livid white shot across the cage, and struck the squirrel upon the neck, once, twice, with the rapidity of an electric flash. The spectators ceased to laugh and whisper—the sight was too horrible. But the brave little squirrel did not shrink or drop. He sprang forward to meet his terrible foe, and caught the writhing tail between his keen teeth. There was a cracking sound like the crushing of chicken bones, a hideous, shrill hiss, an agonised wriggle through the long, speckled body, and the next instant the squirrel was wrapped in the coils of the serpent, while the fragments of the bony rattles fell on the floor of the cage crushed into tiny shivers.

But the squirrel still showed no fear, although the many-coloured folds tightened about him, and the awful triangular head approached with wide open jaws and needle-shaped fangs, and eyes in which the yellow iris seemed transformed to flame. There was another sickly flash of white, as the livid serpent-belly turned upward with the effort of the last venomous stroke. The fangs never reached the squirrel. He caught the speckled neck between eyes; his keen teeth, an inch below the deadly head with his horrible and the horrible eyes started out under the pressure. There was another cracking sound, another series of ghastly convulsions, and the horrible fanged mouth opened for the last time. The squirrel shook the reptile between his strong jaws until the clammy coils dropped from about him; and then flung the whole squirming mass from him. It writhed once or twice, half coiled, and lay still. It was dead. The squirrel immediately after became very sick, and dropped into a state of apparent coma; thus giving the impression that it was dead. But it revived a little yesterday, and may possibly recover. Certainly every care should be taken of it; for a braver fight has never been made by so helpless an animal against so deadly an enemy. The snake will be stuffed.

CURIOUS SUPERSTITION.—Lady Duff Gordon, in her 'Last Letters from Egypt,' mentions a curious superstition which she actually observed, to the effect that twins, if allowed to be hungry, turn into cats at night and go out prowling for food; they only eat a little of your provisions, but if you beat them they will tell their parents next day, "So-and-so beat me in his house last night," and show their bruises. Only twins do it; and if you give them a sort of onion broth and camel's milk the first thing when they are born, they don't do it at all. "One of the American missionaries," says the authoress, "told me something like it as belonging to the Copts, but it is entirely Egyptian, and common to both religions. I asked several Copts, who assured me it was true, and told it just the same. Is it a remnant of the doctrine of transmigration? However, the notion fully accounts for the horror people feel in the idea of killing a cat."

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