
Kingfisher Encounters a Snake.

A remarkable encounter between a Sacred Kingfisher (*Halcyon sanctus*), and a large brown snake was witnessed by Mr. W. J. Dixon, of Fulham, S.A., recently, near his house on the bank of the River Torrens. The bird had made its nest in the usual burrow-like hole in the bank of the stream, some distance from the water below, and the snake wishing to get at it glided stealthily up the bank, all the time closely watched by the agitated bird, which allowed the reptile to get to a place in the bank that was steeper than elsewhere, when it darted with arrow-like swiftness, and a well-directed blow from the long pointed bill on the reptile's head sent it rolling down the bank into the water. Nothing daunted, and like the spider and the monarch of old, the snake after a brief interval was induced to 'try again', and up the bank it glided, but at the same steep part, the kingfisher darted at its adversary's head again, and it rolled down into the water once more, to repeat the performance yet a third time with exactly the same result. Then the snake gave it up, glided away into some thick bushes and disappeared, and the little bird was left monarch of all he surveyed, and its nest was unmolested. The instinct of the kingfisher in attacking its adversary each time at the one place where the steepness gave the little bird an advantage that it could never have gained at any other spot on the bank was remarkable, and is another instance of the almost human thinking power of our feathered friends.

"Mellor Park",
Lockleys, S.A.

JOHN W. MELLOR,
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