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Lion Mastered by Grizzly Bear

"The relative fighting qualities of the African lion and the grizzly bear of the Rocky mountains has always been a topic of much interest and discussion," said a Westerner now in Washington. "Owing to their geographical location and modern civilization, probably no one ever pictured an actual contest as taking place. Yet for the first time in recorded history such a one did take place in recent years on the very border of the United States, and I had the good fortune to be a spectator. I was in Galveston, Texas, at the time when I first learned through the newspapers that a combat between a grizzly bear and Numidian lion would come off in the bull ring at Monterey, Mexico, on the Cincho de Mayo (5th of May). This is the commencement of the Mexican national holiday. It lasts a week and commemorates the birth of the republic. It is a time of great festivities and is much like our Fourth of July.

"I have killed a number of bears and know how formidable they are. It had always been my contention that the grizzly was the superior animal from the standpoint of force, and an opportunity to vindicate my ideas was not to be missed. So overcoming a natural repugnance against such a spectacle I immediately pulled out to witness the outcome. On my arrival at the city I learned the full particulars. Flaming posters everywhere announced that Colonel E. Daniel Boone, 'America's greatest showman and animal trainer,' would give an exhibition on the following day in which old Parnell, an African lion weighing 550 pounds, would be pitted against a 650 pound grizzly bear. The lion, it was stated, had killed two of his trainers during a performance on the Midway at San Francisco's mid-winter fair.

"I learned the history of both contestants. The lion, besides having disposed of two trainers, as was bulletined, had also killed three 2-year-old steers for practice. The bear, on the other hand, had never killed anything, and didn't know his own strength. So, although having the advantage in weight, he was comparatively inoffensive. This inequality was a great handicap to bruin.

"Three o'clock the next afternoon found me at the bull ring looking down upon a large circular iron cage in which bruin was already confined. The boisterous Mexican audience—a restless kaleidoscopic mass of mostly red, white and green, which are the national colors—disturbed him greatly. This was easily seen by his constant nervous tramp around the cage and an occasional sniff and growl.

"Old Parnell occupied a smaller and separate cage. He would now and then give a long-drawn but suppressed roar, which plainly indicated that he better understood what was about to take place.

"The details of the scene I shall never forget. The day was hot and oppressive. High mountains surrounded the open wooden inclosure. The sun beat hot upon the sands of the arena and upon the less fortunate of an eager, excited audience not protected by the shade. Everything was in striking contrast, it seemed to me, but brute and humanity.

"At a signal from Colonel Boone the trap door leading from the lion's compartment to the larger cage was sprung. The king of beasts seemed reluctant to commence the attack. But finally, after being prodded and goaded for that purpose, he sprang with a mighty leap and a terrific roar at bruin's throat. The latter stood erect and received him in his arms, evidently with surprise rather than anger at the onslaught, as he made no immediate effort at attack or defense.

"Simultaneously with the impact the lion locked his huge jaws on the fleshy side of the grizzly's head. They stood erect, swaying to and fro in a mighty struggle for nineteen minutes by actual count. The lion during this time was using his claws with terrible effect. He ripped and tore deep gashes in the hide of his enemy and seemed bent on carpeting the cage with fur. Old bruin finally caught the idea that he was being dealt too much grief and that something must be done in self-defense at least. Evidently acting on this thought he reached out with his powerful arms and enfolded his antagonist with a Herculean hug. I could almost hear the bones cracking. Old Parnell let go his hold with a roar

that seemed to shake the bull ring, and bruin hurled him to the ground with a beautiful half-Nelson that would have done credit to a professional wrestler.

"This put a quietus on his belligerent majesty. Prod, hot iron, and other devices were used to no purpose. He could not be aroused to further display of fury and ferociousness any more than he could be gotten to his feet.

"In the meantime Ephraim had resumed his restless walk around the cage as though nothing of any moment had happened. He did not even deign to notice so contemptible a foe, but accentuated his contempt by repeatedly walking over the fallen monarch at though he were non-existent.

"This state of affairs was suddenly broken into by a second call from the bugle, which, under Mexico's extraordinary law, was notice to Boone to bring his lion to the scratch. Every known means was unsuccessfully applied to that end. The lion would not show fight.

"The audience by this time was in an uproar of excitement and rage. Jeers, epithets and threats were howled from all sides and Boone was in imminent danger of being mobbed. When it is advertised that a thing will be done in Mexico it must be accomplished or serious consequences almost always result, both from the law

and the people. On account of this lamentable display of gameness on the part of the king of beasts, poor Boone was placed under arrest. Repeated demands were then made by the audience for the return of the admission fee. Not until after this was complied with by the management, did the rage subside."—From the Washington Post.

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