

STEALING WOOL IN A MENAGERIE

THEIR MOTIVE MISTAKEN.

From Animal Life.

The student of animal life at the Zoological Gardens is startled frequently by the remarkable display of sagacity that is sometimes made by the inmates of that interesting place. What, for instance, could be more clever, more thoughtful or more amazing than the action of the indigo snake when cold weather comes on. It was illustrated recently. The first breath of cool air that was wafted across the garden informed the indigo snake that a cold wave was at hand. They could not hide their heads under their wings, like the robin of the nursery book. They could not take violent exercise and warm up their blood, for their blood will not warm. So they settle the problem by swallowing each other in turn. One indigo snake will swallow his better-half, for example, until she becomes thoroughly warmed up, and then she will swallow him until he feels comfortable.

It is a very clever action on the part of these snakes. It vindicates their character. The fact that they swallow one another is usually put down by unthinking people to ignorance. They say that the indigo snake will swallow anything, even its friends. Perhaps that is the reason that the snake-story fiend always stations himself in front of the indigo snake's cage. He knows that no matter how big a lie he tells, the snake will swallow it as nonchalantly as though it were a piece of garden hose or some such luxury. But more remarkable in sagacity than the indigo snakes are tropical birds in the aviary. They are probably the most wonderful geniuses ever seen at the "Zoo." Coming as they did from India's coral strand and other places where thermometers die of fever and the iceberg is unknown, they find themselves unprepared for the rigor of the climate here. Such was the condition of a number of the new bird arrivals from India recently. They had nothing but their light summer pajamas with them, and when the biting winds came whistling into their cottage they were chilled to the bone. Their bills chattered like a telegraph instrument on the night of a prize fight, and they shivered terribly. They had no money to

buy intoxicating drinks that would give temporary fervor to them within; they had no rich relatives from whom they could borrow a little with which to purchase additional raiment; they had nothing to hypothecate for a few weeks at the sign of the Lombardy arms. For a verity they were in the grasp of a pitiless thermometer, and whence could they turn for help?

Then their sagacity came to their rescue. They noticed that as the cooler weather drew near a large crop of down appeared on some of the other birds, who were more accustomed to the changes of temperature. They wondered whether a similar growth would make its appearance on them, but, like the youth who watches for his first moustache, they were disappointed. The down did not come. They consulted their tropical friends who had been at the "Zoo" for more than a year. The latter winked and whispered a few words to them which raised hope in their troubled breasts. That night, at twelve minutes past thirteen, these tropical birds went out in a body and attacked the other birds who had more down than they. With sharp bills the tropical birds plucked the down from their sleeping room-mates. Little by little they pulled forth the feathers until they had stolen all they possessed. Taking the down, they interwove it so cleverly in their own feathers that it looked perfectly natural. This kept them nice and warm. Of course, it made the other birds down on them, but they did not care so long as they had warm friends among each other.

"What, you refuse me \$20—me, your intimate friend, whom you once called your second *Ego*?" "Ah, my dear boy, I know myself too well—you would never return the money."—*Le Figaro*.

Apròpos of Dr. Holmes' joke about the firm of Little & Brown, someone recalls the following, perpetrated by John Phenix. Entering a large store in Boston one day, he said to one of the proprietors, "I think I would like to tattle a little." "To tattle! What do you mean by that?" "I don't know," gravely replied the humorist; "but I read an invitation over the door, 'Call & Tattle,' and I thought I would like to know how to do it."