

For some moments it would have been hard to discern which one was getting the advantage, so closely were the squirming black body and the jerking gray one intertwined. Then it could be seen that the raccoon was using his clever, handlike paws as a bear might, to hold his foe down to the punishment. Both contestants were severely bitten, and bleeding freely; but the mink was getting slow, while the raccoon was as cheerfully alert as ever. At length the mink tore free, and made one more desperate reach for his favourite throat hold. But this time the raccoon dodged. He danced aside, flashed back,—and caught the mink fairly under the jaw. Then, bracing himself, he shook his foe triumphantly, as a terrier might; and in a minute or less the long black shape lay moveless on the mud.

Presently the raccoon let go of the