

Busted Out o' Jail.

PRISONERS WERE GONE. BUT THE SHERIFF DID NOT GET EXCITED AT FIRST.

The sheriff of the county jail at Dingsville sat in front of the prison one afternoon sound asleep in his chair, when a citizen of the town rushed up and excitedly exclaimed:

"Say, Joe, ye know that cuss, Tom Peterson, who ye arrested yesterday fur hoss stealin'?"

"Yaas," drawled the sheriff sleepily, as he opened one eye.

"Waal," continued the excited individual, "I jest met him up at the Red Dog saloon not five minits ago!"

"Busted out o' my jail, eh?" queried the official indifferently.

"That's what he's done, Joe. And say, Bill Ferguson, another o' yer prisoners, ar' with him, too."

"Durn 'em!" was all the sheriff said to this, closing his eyes again.

"But that hain't all, Joe! Grizzly George and Prairie Pete, sentenced to be hung, ar' up thar also."

"Hum, ar', eh? All anxious fur a drink, I reckon."

"Yes, but what ar' ye goin' to do about it, Joe?"

"Reckon I'll send 'em up a message that'll skeer 'em half to death. Yes, I reckon I'd better. Ye go up an tell 'em I said if they wasn't back in thar cells in half an hour I'll lock up the jail, an' they won't git in agin in a hurry."

"But—but Joe," said the other disappointedly, "hain't it yer duty to go arter 'em? They'll probably resist and raise a fuss, an then we kin all take a hand an hev a few shots at the critters."

"No," yawned the sheriff, "it's my duty to watch this jail, or some cuss'll be bustin' in to git free board. Jest give 'em my message an don't bother me no more."

"Waal, I'll do it Joe, but it won't do no good, fur they was jest startin a game o' poker as I come away, an ye know—"

"What!" interrupted the sheriff, as he sprang from his chair. "Startin a game o' poker, d'ye say!"

"That's what they was doin, an—"

"Then why didn't ye say so in the first place, ye idiot? Skip right over thar on the run an tell 'em to hold on till I kin git in the game too. Whoop! A poker game goin on an me sittin yere with nothin to do an feelin lucky 'nuff to win a fortune. Hurry up, fur if that game ar' broken up afore I git thar I'll arrest ye fur keepin secrets that might hev furthured the ways o' justice."—A. B. Lewis in *New York Sunday World*.

A Regular Gold Mine.

"I shall go home to my father." The poor poet sat with bowed head while his wife continued her tirade.

"Is this what you call supporting me in the style I was always accustomed to?" she went on with flashing eyes, as she waved her hand sarcastically around the shabbily furnished room.

"But, my dear," returned the poet, at last getting a word in edgeways, "you ask me for more than I can afford at present."

"What have I asked for?" she snapped out. "A plaid waist!"

"And a sealskin sacque," he added.

"Yes, and a sealskin sacque."

"And a bicycle."

"Well, what if I have. Hasn't everybody got one?"

The poet made no answer. He knew how useless it was to reason with an angry woman, and as he sat running his fingers through his tangled hair his wife packed up a few things in a valise and walked out of the house without as much as a word of farewell.

A week passed. The poet sat scratching his head in search of the rhyme that wouldn't come, when an expressman came to the door with a bicycle addressed to his wife. A few minutes later his wife appeared. As she removed her sealskin sacque the poet saw that she wore a plaid waist.

"I'm so glad I went to see papa," she said, as she kissed him.

"I should say you were," he replied.

"If you went back once a week, in a bout a year we would be able to move in society."

Wrong End Up.

Two Irishmen recently were crossing Marlinstown bog, on their way to the market, when one of them, Mick, slipped and fell into a bog hole. Pat, his mate, immediately ran to the nearest farmhouse, and, meeting the farmer, asked for the loan of a spade.

"What do yer want the spade for?" asked the farmer.

"Mick is stuck in the bog?" said Pat, "and I want to dig him out."

"How far has he sunk?" queried the farmer.

"Up to his ankles," said Pat.

"Sure he can aisy walk out," said the farmer.

"Begorra," said Pat, "he can't, for he's in head first."

Question—What is the highest form of animal life. Answer—The giraffe.

Speed of Ducks.

THE EXACT RATE AT WHICH A FLOCK WAS FLYING DETERMINED.

The speed of a duck while flying has been the subject of considerable controversy and speculation. A number of statements giving the speed of flying ducks have been made, ranging from sixty up to as high as ninety miles an hour. Just how these rates of speed were determined has been a mystery. The cold fact was announced that a wild duck could fly so many miles an hour, unaccompanied by any explanation as to the measures taken to ascertain the truth of the statement. Anyone having any experience with wild ducks knows that they sometimes fly faster than at others. A duck that has had two or three double-barrelled shotguns discharged at it covers more space in a given time than one that is leisurely proceeding to its feeding ground, but when it is said a duck flies so many miles an hour it presumably means its ordinary travelling gait.

The exact rate of travel of one flock of ducks has been definitely and exactly determined. Upon the Neponset river, a few days ago, two men from the Blue Hill observatory were measuring clouds by triangulation when a flock of ducks crossed the base line, which was about 8496 feet long. Both the observers got a set of measurements on the apex of the flock and several subsequent observations, and from these the height and speed of the flock were ascertained. The height of the birds above the line was 958 feet and their velocity was 47.8 miles an hour. It is not stated what kind of ducks they were, but they were wild ducks, and their rate of speed was accurately determined. They were not particularly in a hurry, but were on a business trip, neither wasting time nor making a record. The wind was blowing two miles an hour from the north, while the ducks were going south-west, so that the test was fair.

"Bird of Death."

Among all the thousands of feathered creatures classified by the trained ornithologist, but one, the rpir n'doob, or "bird of death," is known to be venomous. This queer and deadly species of the winged and feathered tribe is a native of the island of Papua, or New Guinea. The bird is described as being about the size of a common tame pigeon, of gray plumage, and a tail of extraordinary length, ending in a tip of brilliant scarlet red. It is a marsh bird and is found to inhabit only the immense stagnant pools adjoining the lakes of the interior of the island. The rpir has a hooked beak, as sharp as a cock's spur, and hollow. The venom with which he inoculates is distilled in a set of organs which nature has provided for that purpose, and which lie in the upper mandible just below the openings of the nostrils. Under this poison-secreting laboratory in the roof of the mouth is a small, fleshy knob. When the bird sets its beak in the flesh of a victim this knob liberates the venom and inoculates the wound. No man, native or otherwise, was ever known to recover from a bite inflicted by a rpir n'doob. The suffering in such cases is said to be much more agonizing than in cases of rattlesnake or Gila monster bites.

The Loon.

The loon is found in all the northern regions of this country. It is a very awkward bird on land, but a graceful and rapid swimmer. It is a remarkable diver, and it is thought that no other feathered creature can dive so far beneath the surface or remain so long a time under water. A specimen was once found attached to the hook of a fisherman's set line in Seneca lake, it having dived nearly 100 feet to reach the bait. It feeds on lizards, fish, frogs, all kinds of aquatic insects, and the roots of fresh-water plants, usually swallowing its food under water. It is a very large bird, about three feet in length and spreads its wings fully five feet. It builds its nest in marshes, near water, of rushes and grass, which it twists together in a huge heap on the ground, usually among tall reeds. The eggs, usually three in number, are a little over three inches long, and in color of a dull greenish ochre, with indistinct spots of dark umber, most numerous toward the broad end. During the winter this bird lives near the seashore, especially in the salt marshes on the Long Island coast, and along the shores of the Chesapeake; but in the summer it goes as far north as Labrador and breeds there in large numbers.

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