

The Boys' and Girls' Own Page

SPORTS, STORIES, GAMES, PUZZLES, HANDICRAFT, SCIENCE, ADVENTURE, JOKES, CARTOONS

SIGHTSEEING TRIPS WITH THE BIRDS

The bobolink belongs to the blackbird family, strange to say, as do also the red-winged blackbird and the meadowlark.



The Cheery Bobolink

The Fourth of July you may see this jet black bird with back and wings of white and a buff patch on his neck, starting from the northern fields toward the south. The bobolinks descend in hordes on the rice plantations of the South when the grain is in the milk, doing millions of dollars of damage to the crops. The rice-bird, as he is called there, is snared or poisoned and it is common to buy for fifty cents in the markets half a dozen birds that have been shot, plucked and prepared for the oven.

As the bobolink travels south his feathers change to a winter suit of striped brown such as sparrows wear. Those that escape death by the angry owners of the rice-fields go by way of Florida to Brazil for the colder months.



The Gay Red-Wing

Down among the cat-tails by the water the red-winged blackbird lives and sings his gurgling song. An author of bird stories says that his "Oo-long-tee-see" sounds as if he had water in his windpipe. The redwing's like a soldier in a black uniform with scarlet and buff epaulets, or shoulder straps.

His rusty-feathered mate lays eggs in a nest down among the reeds only a few inches above the water's edge. The eggs are laid in May and are pale blue, spotted and blotched. While the red-winged blackbird's family is young, the father sings in a lusty rich voice close beside it, very proud of his babies. He circles about the nest pecking angrily at any passerby whom he always suspects of wanting to rob him of his fledglings. But by July the fussy father has become a restless family deserter. He fluffs away with other birds, leaving his babes to the care of their mother.

The meadowlark has a rude habit of turning his back upon us as though he considers his yellow breast with its black crescent too beautiful to gaze upon. He is a good example of protective coloring for the brownish mottled back and wings blend in with the grasses of the fields where he lives. His nest, too, is made of grasses, flat on the ground, so it is no wonder the farmer allows his mowing machine to pass over the nest, often ruining eggs and all before he sees it. The mate, which is just like the male, is kept securely at home in the nest arched over with grass while her husband walks in his stiff, long-legged way to a stump or low fence rail to sing his tender, sweet song, "Spring of the Year!"



Oriole Has Queer Song

There is a flash of flame in the maple tree, a high whistled song follows, and we know the Baltimore oriole, another member of the ill-assorted blackbird family, has arrived from Central America where he wintered.

The Baltimore oriole is so named because Lord Baltimore in olden time had for his heraldic colors black and orange. This will surprise many who take it for granted that the city in Maryland was responsible for this oriole's name. Lady Baltimore wears a yellowish-olive dress with dusky wings and tail. The nest she weaves is a remarkable pocket which swings from a limb about twenty-five feet above the ground. Sometimes it is hung over a river, and the baby orioles, seeking to climb out of the deep pouch before they are able to fly, are often drowned in the stream.

HOW TO GIVE A PARTY ON APRIL FOOL'S DAY

One may go to an April Fool party with his mind firmly made up that he will believe nothing he sees or hears, but if the hostess is clever, before that person has been at the party many minutes he will find that, in spite of his resolutions, he's been tricked, and the laugh's on him!

For instance, when he goes into the house and sees a "Wet Paint" sign on a door, the natural thing to do is to walk past gingerly, though if he thinks he will realize the sign is only part of the April foolishness, for the door is safe and dry. When wraps are taken off, the guests will be annoyed to find, upon looking in the mirror, that they are perfect frights. Trying to fix up a bit with powder that turns out to be flour, and trying to see their back hair in a handglass that has a black front, will finally force the truth on them that the mirror is a distorted one, which accounts for their odd appearance. On the way back downstairs some one will be sure to pick up a lost handkerchief, only to find that it is fastened to a string and was put there to tease trusting folk. And if by that time he hasn't learned to view the party with a mistrustful eye, he may try to pick up a quarter from the floor, which he won't be able to do because it is glued there.

When the Table's Turned Soon an April Fool game is started. The hostess gathers a crowd around her, explaining that she will be able to tell the name of any musical number her friends select if they will only beat time silently with their fingers. The hostess leaves the room to allow her guests to decide upon a popular piece. When she returns, all beat time in unison, making no sound. The hostess listens, then explains that she has guessed it. "What are we playing?" asked the leader. "You are all playing the fool!" is the hostess's reply.

Every One Makes a Rhyme A game to play with paper and pencil is Foolish Rhymes. Papers are passed around, the top of each bearing the words:

"It happened once on April Fool," Each person adds a second line that rhymes, then, turning down the paper so that what he has written is concealed, he passes the sheet on to the next one, who adds a third rhyming line. When the fourth line is completed, the papers are passed again, then opened and read one at a time. The players have been instructed to make their lines humorous, so a sample of what one may have passed to him is this:

"It happened once on April Fool, The Autumn air was fresh and cool, He cried, 'I will not go to school! Fair Alice was a small white mule."

below. The oriole is not a plentiful species of bird, and considering those that are killed in their babyhood, the eggs that are destroyed when crows, screech owls, grackles and even red squirrels plunder the oriole's nest, it is small wonder that the birds are scarce. Orioles until they are about three years old are usually a dull brownish orange-yellow color like their mother, but they turn brilliant in time. The oriole's song is a syncopated tootle. Compared to the sweet music of many other birds of the orchard, it seems that he is the rattle-singer of the group, throwing out a few notes, then pecking for a few minutes at a caterpillar, or beetle, and breaking forth again.

Cowbird Is Wicked The cowbird is the disreputable member of the blackbird family. He is a walking bird that follows the cow and feeds upon the parasites on their backs. This blackbird with his coffee-brown head, neck and breast is shut out from polite society in the bird world because of the lawlessness of the female, who deposits her eggs in the nests of other birds, letting various members of the neighborhood hatch and rear her big, greedy babies.

The yellow warbler outwits the cowbird by weaving a new bottom in her nest over the egg that the sneaking bird manages to sneak in. Her own speckled eggs may be sealed up with it, but she knows if she hatches a cowbird that her own youngsters will starve while the intruder devours all the food she works herself to death to provide for the nest. She may have to weave two or even three floors, sealing up the eggs beneath, and such nests, when found, are very interesting to examine.

PETER PUZZLE SAYS—

Behold a part and get an animal, Behold again and get a form of the verb to be. Behold to cut and get to perceive. Behold again and get the object with which you perceive.



You should select your most innocent guest to send on the "Fool's Errand."

STORIES OF PRECIOUS JEWELS

OF ALL THE GEMS THE DIAMOND IS QUEEN

The queen of precious stones is the diamond. It is of greater value than any other precious stone, and is undoubtedly the most beautiful. In early Greek days the diamond was called adamas, meaning "the unshakable," because of its hardness and resistance to fire. Pliny, an early writer, gave a description of it, saying it exceeded in value all human things, being the property fit only for kings, and not all kings at that.



The illustration shows how diamonds were once used in England to make frames for painted miniatures and cameos.

The Indian and Arabian stones were at that time the most famous, their hardness being so great that people said if the stones were struck with a hammer, even the iron and anvil would be torn apart, but the diamond would be unharmed. Other superstitions held that the stone could not be burned away unless first dipped in fresh goat's blood.

In Brazil in 1727 some one discovered that the sparkling stones being used by the negroes for counters in their card games were valuable diamonds. Diamond mines were immediately opened up and proved a source of wealth, though Brazilian diamonds were not considered in Europe to be of equal value to those from India.

Diamonds have been mined in

Australia, though they are but small ones. South Africa has become the treasure trove of diamonds in recent times. In 1867 a Dutch farmer bought a bright stone from a native to give to his children for a plaything. A traveler who saw it discovered that it was a diamond of value. An investigation of the source proved that a wealth of diamonds was to be found in the vicinity. Since that time a large part of the diamond supply has been brought from the Orange River district near the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

Diamonds are cut in several ways. Two diamonds are securely fastened and rubbed together until each has assumed the desired shape of a "rose-cut" diamond is one which is flat underneath and topped by twelve or more little facets, the uppermost ending in a point.

The Orloff diamond in the scepter of the emperor of Russia has been known through history as one of the largest. One story says it formed the eye of an idol in India and was stolen by a Frenchman; another says it belonged to a Shah of Persia who was murdered. An Armenian merchant took it to Paris and sold it. Somehow it came into the possession of Count Orloff, who bought it for the Empress Catherine for a fabulous sum. The Pitt diamond is another with a history. It was mounted in the hilt of the sword of state worn by Napoleon I. These unusually large diamonds seem to pass eventually into the hands of royalty, for the Austrian royal family owns the third largest diamond in the world, the Florentine, or Grand Duke, and England's Crown possesses the Koh-i-noor, which means Mountain of Light. It was mined near Golconda, so history says, and worn 5,000 years ago by an Indian hero. Some say that the Koh-i-noor and the Orloff diamonds were parts of the same great stone owned by the Great Mogul. It was cut up into thirds, the last part having been found in India in 1832, but if left united would have been the most wonderful diamond of history.

Is Hardest Mineral

Diamonds are of great importance in the manufacture of other precious stones. Because the diamond is the hardest of all mineral substances, its dust can be used effectively on the other stones. It cuts, polishes and slices other gems. The edge of a crystal is rounded and used to cut and engrave glass and steel. The black diamond is used for boring hard rocks.

The most desirable is of a pure white-hue, but it is found in pink, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, brown and black.

The "brilliant" cut is the most modern, and shows off the beauty of the diamond best. It is cut in faces both at top and bottom, the principal face of which is flat. There are fifty-eight faces altogether, thirty-two on the top and twenty-four on the back. A very slight imperfection may greatly lower the value of the diamond.

Many curious superstitions are connected with the diamond. It was believed to be magnetic, and sometimes to be capable of driving away madness. The diamond was believed to influence its wearer to be good and brave. It is especially lucky for all persons born in April to wear diamonds.

PETER PUZZLE SAYS—

See if you can solve these B-Headings: Behold a stream to make a bird. Behold to flower and get a weaving machine. Behold something that sweeps and get what it sweeps. Behold to bat the eye and get part of a chain. Behold again and get a writing fluid. Behold the edge and get a place to skate. Behold dreary and get a means of escape.

Answer to today's beheading puzzle: Share, hare, are, share, bear, ear. Answer to today's B-headings: Brook, rock; bloom, loom; broom, room; blink, link; ink, drink, rink; B-head, least.

She Knew Dorothy: "Did you enjoy the correspondence course you took last summer?" Marjorie: "Oh, it was all write."

BASKETBALL FINE POINTS OF THE GAME



The best joke of all at the party is one patterned after an old Scotch trick for April Fool. The hostess may call aside some very conscientious person and explain that she cannot serve refreshments without some more plates. She hands him a note to carry to a neighbor, telling him that Mrs. Green will read there what is wanted and give him the things to bring back. The boy starts out, never suspecting that there is an April Fool sign on his back. At Mrs. Green's door he learns that he must go over to Mrs. Brown's for the dishes, for she has just loaned her best china to her daughter, who is giving a party. Mrs. Brown, it seems, has no ice cream plates, and the note, so she says, does not ask for dinner plates. Her suggestion is that the boy go next door to Mrs. Smith's. If the boy has not "tumbled" by this time, he may continue on his fool's errand until somebody tells him the note explains that those who receive it are to each send the boy on to another person. If the guests at the party have been put wise to the trick being played on their comrade, his empty-handed return will be greeted with much laughter.

Refreshments Come Next The dining table centerpiece at an April Fool party may on first glance seem to be the conventional basket of fruit. On closer inspection it turns out to be a choice collection of assorted vegetables, carefully scrubbed Irish potatoes, carrots, radishes, celery even a purple eggplant in the center!

Small menus in front of the places announce these refreshments: Chocolate Sundae

Oranges Cake Empty plates are passed first. No one person gets the same kind or size. One may receive a bread-and-butter plate, another a soup dish, still another a meat platter. When oranges are passed, each guest helps himself from the fruit basket in which they are piled. He takes a spoon at the same time he receives his orange, and the one who passes tells those being served that the oranges are to be eaten with the spoon. Then it is discovered that the tops of the oranges come off and the orange shell contains orange sherbet.

What appears to be a platter of chocolate sundaes turns out, when each guest is served to be, to be cones of cake covered with chocolate icing. Since the orange turned out to be the ice cream, and the ice cream the cake, the guests wonder what the cake on the menu will be. About that time little cakes of soap, guest size, are given out as favors, and that is how the bill of fare turns out.

A team that sees the ball in the hands of the opponent nearly all the time will soon become discouraged. The ball is the main object of the game, therefore the team that never gets it, feels that its cause is lost. That is one reason for striving for possession of the ball—it keeps up the morale of your team at the same time it breaks down that of the opposing one.

Most players form the habit of executing maneuvers on the court in a certain way. It is for these habits that a player must watch in order to check the opponent. He may find that a player invariably pivots in a certain direction. When he has learned this, he can anticipate his opponent's movement and block a pass.

When advancing upon a player, you should watch his eyes, just as a boxer watches his adversary's eyes. Unless the opponent is experienced, he will betray the direction in which he intends to throw the ball, and you may see how to block the pass.

In dribbling, one way to evade the opponent is to shift from one side to the other, as indicated in the picture above, thus after following your dribble on one side for two or three steps, he will be thrown off at your change.

IN SNOOPYQUOP LAND WHERE NOTHING SEEMS QUEER



As I live and breathe, he's come at last! Cicero Spring, the Duke of the four seasons, is now with us. You know the saying, "In the spring a young Snopyquop's fancy, etc.," and Cicero is certainly all dolled up in his fanciest clothes. His new South-Easter hat is well ventilated, showing that there is "nothing in it." (That's what the brain specialist said when he examined Cicero's head.) Doesn't he look magnificent, standing there in his new spring underwear, his one button spats, his two quart hat and his kiddo gloves. In his hand he holds a flower that blooms in the spring, tra la la. It's a chrisanthem—er, a crysanth— that is, a krysantham—aw, call it a rose, I can spell that! P. S. The collie dog in the corner has got a collie-flower.

Enlightened "I have a window in my soul!" Announced the poet great; His brother said: "Your words give me 'A pane I can't locate!'"

Assop Revised Birds of a feather flunk together.

Impossible Youth (poetically): "Drink to me with thine eyes." Maiden: "I can't; I don't wear glasses."

Another Dumb One Little Boy: "Sheep are the dumbest animals." Mother (absently): "Yes, mv lamb."

