

and, inviting them to enter, he showed each member of the party into a small bedroom, of which there seemed to be a great many.

"Here are water and towels," he said to each one, "and when you have washed your faces and hands, your refreshments will be ready." Then, going out, he locked the door on the outside.

The party numbered seventeen: the Prince, three courtiers, five boys, five girls, the course-marker, the map maker, and the Jolly-cum-pop. The heart of the jailer was joyful; seventeen inmates was something to be proud of. He ordered his myrmidons to give the prisoners a meal of bread and water through the holes in their cell-doors, and then he sat down to make his report to the Potentate.

"They must all be guilty of crimes," he said to himself, "which are punished by long imprisonment. I don't want any of them executed."

So he numbered his prisoners from one to seventeen, according to the cell each happened to be in, and he wrote a crime opposite each number. The first was highway robbery, the next forgery, and after that followed treason, smuggling, barn-burning, bribery, poaching, usury, piracy, witchcraft, assault and battery, using false weights and measures, burglary, counterfeiting, robbing hen-roosts, conspiracy, and poisoning his grandmother by proxy.

This report was scarcely finished when the Potentate returned. He was very much surprised to find that seventeen prisoners had come in since his previous visit, and he read the report with interest.

"It seems to me that a great many of your prisoners are very young."

"It is best to take them young, my Lord," said the jailer. "They are very hard to catch when they grow up."

The Potentate then looked in at the Jolly-cum-pop, and asked what was his offence.

"Conspiracy," was the answer.

"And where are the other conspirators?"

"There was only one," said the jailer.

The Prince and his party had been very much surprised and incensed when they found that they could not get out of their rooms, and they had kicked and banged and shouted until they were tired, but the jailer had informed them that they were to be confined there for years; and when the Potentate arrived they had resigned themselves to despair. The Jolly-cum-pop, however, was affected in a different way. It seemed to him the most amusing joke in the world that a person should deliberately walk into a prison-cell and be locked up for several years; and he lay down on his little bed and laughed himself to sleep.

That night one of the boys sat at his iron-barred window, wide awake. He was a Truant, and had never yet been in any place from which he could not run away. He felt that his school-fellows depended upon him to run away and bring them assistance, and he knew that his reputation as a Truant was at stake. His responsibility was so heavy that he could not sleep, and he sat at the window, trying to think of a way to get out. After some hours the moon arose, and by its light he saw upon the grass, not far from his window, a number of pigwidgeons, a kind of fairy, about six inches high. They were standing around a flat stone, and seemed to be making calculations on it with a piece of chalk. At this sight, the heart of the Truant jumped for joy. "Fairies can do anything," he said to himself, "and these certainly can get us out." On his urging them in a loud whisper to come to his relief, they approached the prison and, clambering up a vine, soon reached his window sill. The Truant now told his mournful tale, to which the pigwidgeons listened very attentively; and then, after a little consultation among themselves, one of them said: "We will get you out if you will tell us how to divide five-sevenths by six."

The poor Truant was silent for an instant, and then he said: "That is not the kind of thing I am good at, but I expect some of the other fellows could tell you easily enough. Our windows must be all in a row, and you can climb up and ask some of them; and if any one tells you, will you get us all out?"

"Yes," said the pigwidgeon who had spoken before, "We will do that, for we are very anxious to know how to divide five-sevenths by six. We have been working at it for four or five days, and there won't be anything worth dividing if we wait much longer."

The pigwidgeons now began to descend the vine; but one of them lingering a little, the Truant, who had a great deal of curiosity, asked him what it was they had to divide.

"There were eight of us," the pigwidgeon answered, "who helped a farmer's wife, and she gave us a pound of butter. She did not count us properly, and divided the butter into seven parts. We did not notice this at first, but two of the party, who were obliged to go away a distance, took their portions and departed, and now we cannot divide among six the five-sevenths that remain."

"That is a pretty hard thing," said the Truant, "but I am sure some of the boys can tell you how to do it."

The pigwidgeons visited the four next cells, which were occupied by four boys, but not one of them could tell how to divide five-sevenths by six. The Prince was questioned, but he did not know; and neither did the course-marker, nor the map-maker. It was not until they came to the cell of the oldest girl that they received an answer. She was good at mental arithmetic; and, after a minute's thought, she said, "it would be five forty-seconds."

"Good!" cried the pigwidgeons. "We will divide the butter into forty-two parts, and each take five. And now let us go to work and cut these bars."

Three of the six pigwidgeons were workers in iron, and they had their little files and saws in pouches by their sides. They went to work manfully, and the others helped them, and before morning one bar was cut in each of the seventeen windows. The cells were all on the ground floor, and it was quite easy for the prisoners to clamber out. That is, it was easy for all but the Jolly-cum-pop. He had laughed so much in his life that he had grown quite fat, and he found it impossible to squeeze himself through the opening made by the removal of one window-bar. The sixteen other persons had all departed; the pigwidgeons had hurried away to divide their butter into forty-two parts, and the Jolly-cum-pop still remained in his cell, convulsed with laughter at the idea of being caught in such a curious predicament.

The Prince's party was soon in a doleful plight. Every one was very hungry; they were in an open plain, no house was visible, and they knew not which way to go. It would be difficult to find sixteen more miserable people than the Prince and his companions when they awoke the next morning from their troubled sleep on the hard ground. Nearly starved to death, they gazed at one another with feelings of despair.

"I feel," said the Prince, in a weak voice, "that there is nothing I would not do to obtain food. I would willingly become a slave if my master would give me a good breakfast."

"So would I," ejaculated each one of the others.

About an hour after this, as they were all sitting disconsolately upon the ground, they saw, slowly approaching, a large cart drawn by a pair of oxen. On the front of the cart, which seemed to be heavily loaded, sat a man, with a red beard, reading a book. The boys, when they saw the cart, set up a feeble shout, and the man, lifting his eyes from his book, drove directly toward the group on the ground. Dismounting, he approached Prince Hassak, who immediately told him his troubles and implored relief.

"We will do anything," said the Prince, "to obtain food."

The man with the red beard had upon his brow the marks of earnest thought. Standing for a minute in a reflective mood, he addressed the Prince in a slow, meditative manner: "How would you like," he said, "to form a nucleus?"

"Can we get anything to eat by it?" eagerly asked the Prince.

"Yes," replied the man, "you can."

"We'll do it!" immediately cried the whole sixteen, without waiting for further information.

"Which will you do first," said the man, "listen to my explanations, or eat?"

"Eat!" cried the entire sixteen in chorus.

The man now produced from his cart a quantity of bread, meat, wine, and other provisions, which he distributed generously, but judiciously, to the hungry Prince and

his followers. Everyone had enough, but no one had too much. And soon, revived and strengthened, they felt like new beings.

"Now," said the Prince, "we are ready to form a nucleus, as we promised. How is it done?"

"I will explain the matter to you in a few words," said the man with the red beard and the thoughtful brow. "For a long time I have been desirous to found a city. In order to do this one must begin by forming a nucleus. Every great city is started from a nucleus. I am very glad to have found you and that you are willing to enter into my plan; and this seems a good spot for us to settle upon."

"What is the first thing to be done?" said the Prince.

"We must all go to work," said the man with the red beard, "build dwellings, and also a schoolhouse for these young people. Then we must till some ground in the suburbs, and lay the foundations, at least, of a few public buildings."

"All this will take a good while, will it not?" said the Prince.

"Yes," said the man, "it will take a good while; and the sooner we set about it the better."

When the jailer looked into his cells in the morning, and found that all but one of his prisoners had escaped, he was utterly astounded, and his face, when the Jolly-cum-pop saw him, made that individual roar with laughter. The jailer, however, was a man accustomed to deal with emergencies. "You need not laugh," he said, "everything shall go on as before, and I shall take no notice of the absence of your companions. You are now numbers One to Seventeen inclusive, and you stand charged with highway robbery, forgery, treason, smuggling, barn-burning, bribery, poaching, usury, piracy, witchcraft, assault and battery, using false weights and measures, burglary, counterfeiting, robbing hen-roosts, conspiracy, and poisoning your grandmother by proxy. I intended to-day to dress the convicts in prison garb, and you shall immediately be so clothed."

"I shall require seventeen suits," said the Jolly-cum-pop.

"Yes," said the jailer, "they shall be furnished."

"And seventeen rations a day," said the Jolly-cum-pop.

"Certainly," replied the jailer.

"This is luxury," roared the Jolly-cum-pop. "I shall spend my whole time in eating and putting on clean clothes."

Seventeen large prison suits were now brought to the Jolly-cum-pop. He put on one and hung up the rest in his cell. These suits were half bright yellow and half bright green, with spots of bright red, as big as saucers.

The jailer now had doors cut from one cell to another. "If the Potentate comes here and wants to look at the prisoners," he said to the Jolly-cum-pop, "you must appear in cell number One, so that he can look through the hole in the door, and see you; then as he walks along the corridor, you must walk through the cells, and whenever he looks into a cell, you must be there."

"He will think," merrily replied the Jolly-cum-pop, "that all your prisoners are very fat, and that the little girls have grown up into big men."

"I will endeavour to explain that," said the jailer.

For several days the Jolly-cum-pop was highly amused at the idea of his being seventeen criminals, and he would sit first in one cell and then in another, trying to look like a ferocious pirate, a hard-hearted usurer, or a mean-spirited chicken thief, and laughing heartily at his failures. But, after a time, he began to tire of this, and to have a strong desire to see what sort of a tunnel the Prince's miners and rock-splitters were making under his house. "I had hoped," he said to himself, "that I should pine away in confinement, and so be able to get through the window-bars; but with nothing to do, and seventeen rations a day, I see no hope of that. But I must get out of this gaol, and, as there seems no other way, I will revolt." Thereupon he shouted to the jailer through the hole in the door of his cell: "We have revolted! We have risen in a body, and have determined to resist your authority, and break gaol!"

When the jailer heard this, he was greatly troubled, "Do not proceed to violence," he said; "let us parley."

"Very well," replied the Jolly-cum-pop, "but you must open the cell door. We cannot parley through a hole."

The jailer thereupon opened the cell door, and the Jolly-cum-pop, having wrapped sixteen suits of clothes around his left arm as a shield, and holding in his right hand the iron bar which had been cut from his window, stepped boldly into the corridor, and confronted the jailer and his myrmidons.

"It will be useless for you to resist," he said. "You are but four, and we are seventeen. If you had been wise you would have made us all cheating shop-keepers, chicken-thieves, or usurers. Then you might have been able to control us; but when you see before you a desperate highwayman, a daring smuggler, a blood-thirsty pirate, a wily poacher, a powerful ruffian, a reckless burglar, a bold conspirator, and a murderer by proxy, you well may tremble."

The jailer and his myrmidons looked at each other in dismay.

"We sigh for no blood," continued the Jolly-cum-pop, "and will readily agree to terms. We will give you your choice: Will you allow us to honourably surrender, and peacefully disperse to our homes, or shall we rush upon you in a body, and, after overpowering you by numbers, set fire to the gaol, and escape through the crackling timbers of the burning pile?"

The jailer reflected for a minute. "It would be better, perhaps," he said, "that you should surrender and disperse to your homes."

The Jolly-cum-pop agreed to these terms, and the great gate being opened, he marched out in good order. "Now," said he to himself, "the thing for me to do is to get home as fast as I can, or that jailer may change his mind." But, being in a great hurry, he turned the wrong way, and walked rapidly into a country unknown to him.

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The Jolly-cum-pop now set out again, but he walked a long distance without seeing any person or any house. Toward the close of the afternoon he stopped, and, looking back, he saw coming toward him a large party of foot travellers. In a few moments, he perceived that the person in advance was the jailer. At this the Jolly-cum-pop could not restrain his merriment. "How comically it has all turned out!" he exclaimed. "Here I've taken all this trouble and tired myself out, and eaten butter without bread, and the jailer comes now, with a crowd of people, and takes me back. I might as well have staid where I was. Ha! Ha!"

The jailer now left his party and came running toward the Jolly-cum-pop. "I pray you, sir," he said, bowing very low, "do not cast us off."

"Who are you all?" asked the Jolly-cum-pop, looking with much surprise at the jailer's companions, who were now quite near.

"We are myself, my three myrmidons, and our wives and children. Our situations were such good ones that we married long ago, and our families lived in the upper stories of the prison. But when all the convicts had left we were afraid to remain, for, should the Potentate again visit the prison, he would be disappointed and enraged at finding no prisoners, and would, probably, punish us grievously. So we determined to follow you, and to ask you to let us go with you, wherever you are going. I wrote a report, which I fastened to the great gate, and in it I stated that sixteen of the convicts escaped by the aid of outside confederates, and that seventeen of them mutinied in a body and broke gaol."

"That report," laughed the Jolly-cum-pop, "your Potentate will not readily understand."

"If I were there," said the jailer, "I could explain it to him; but, as it is, he must work it out for himself."

"Have you anything to eat with you?" asked the Jolly-cum-pop.

"Oh, yes," said the jailer, "we brought provisions."

"Well, then, I gladly take you under my protection. Let us have supper. I have had nothing to eat since morning but thirty forty-seconds of a pound of butter."

The Jolly-cum-pop and his companions slept that night under some trees, and