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THE SHERIFF'S STRATAGEM

By M. QUAD

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As I was resting at the top of a long hill I was overtaken by a man on horseback, and after salutations had been exchanged he observed that he was in no hurry and would get down to smoke a pipe with me. After awhile he announced that he was the county sheriff and was then on his way to recapture a prisoner who had broken out of jail at Smithville the night before. The prisoner lived in a cabin a short distance down the road, and as we finished our pipes and jogged along the officer suggested that I call with him and witness the performance.

"But is the fugitive a dangerous man?" I asked.

"That's according to how you take him," was the answer.

"And how do you mean to take him?"

"Oh, I'll be sort of soft and gentle with him, and if there is going to be any shooting you'll have warning in time to get out."

It was summer time, and when we reached the cabin the escaped prisoner sat on the doorstep with a shotgun across his knees and a pipe between his teeth. His wife, who was also smoking, sat on a log near by having the family ax close at hand, and the pair never even looked up while the sheriff was dismounting and hitching his horse to a tree. I got the wink to await developments, and we took seats on a stump within twenty feet of the door and filled our pipes for another

smoke. Neither the man nor his wife paid the slightest attention to us or we to them, and thus stood the situation for a quarter of an hour. Then the fugitive began to grow uneasy, and after a bit he said:

"Tom, I reckon yo' hev come for me!"

"Skassly, Bill, skassly," replied the sheriff as he looked up in seeming surprise.

"If yo' hev I'll never be taken back to that jail alive!" growled the fugitive.

I glanced at the wife, and the look on her face and the way she fingered the ax told plainly that she was ready to stand by her husband in case he needed help.

"Don't git oneasy," advised the sheriff. Then he began to tell me about the county jail. It wasn't so much to look at from the outside and lots of people thereby got a wrong impression of it. One must become a prisoner to appreciate that jail.

The beds were of the best.

The fare was that of a hotel.

Once a day the sheriff came in and related all the outside news.

Euchre decks and cigars and plug tobacco furnished free of charge.

Visitors admitted any time of the day or night, and they could stay as long as they desired.

Once every week there is a big entertainment, either a vaudeville show or a mighty fine concert.

"Why, Bill," we heard the jail breaker's wife say to him, "you never dun tole me that the jail was like this."

"Dog my cats, but I didn't know it myself!" he growled.

"It's better than bein' right yere at home."

And then the sheriff went on to say that when holidays came the prisoners got such a feast as few men outside

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ever got. Besides mince pie and fried oysters, there were ten cent cigars to smoke and champagne to drink.

"But Bill must have mistook about it," said the wife.

"Mrs. Baker, I hate to say anything to a wife about her husband," answered the officer, "but I must tell you that I never had any one in my jail so ornery as your Bill. He was kicking like a mawl all the time."

"But I wanted to git outer jail," said Bill.

"Of co'se you did—of co'se, and why? You found the other prisoners so fur above you in education and manners that it was uncomfortable fur you."

"Bill can read and write his name," boasted his wife.

"Yes?"

"And what's the matter with his manners?"

"I will tell you after you first tell me why every one was glad when he broke jail and vanished. They made me promise when I came away this morning not to bring him back. They are mighty sorry fur you, Mrs. Baker, but they hain't got no use for any sich critter as your Bill."

"And you wasn't lookin' fur me?" anxiously asked Bill.

"I was, but it was to tell you that you can't come back to my jail no mo'. No, sah, you can't. If I catch you around there'll be a big row."

"Bill, you are gwine right back to that jail," said his wife.

"Sorry, Mrs. Baker, but I can't take him."

"But I say he's got to go! I hain't gwine to stand for folks sayin' we are low down."

"Yes, I'm gwine right back," growled the husband.

"You are out, and you'd better stay out."

"I'll be hanged if I will!"

"Please let him go back with you!" pleaded the wife.

The sheriff seemed to be pondering for full five minutes before he answered:

"Well, it's on your account, Mrs. Baker, fur I do feel sorry fur you. He can tag along behind, and I'll never try to do him a favor ag'in."

And an hour later Bill Baker was in the county jail.

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TILLAMOOK, OREGON

THE FORTY IMMORTALS.

Origin and Checkered Career of the
French Academy.

The Institute of France had its inception in 1570, when there was founded in Paris by the French poet, Antoine de Baif, a literary and musical society, known as the Academy of the Valois. Charles IX. granted it letters patent on Nov. 20, 1570, as the Academy of Poetry and Music. It had, however, no stability. Attacked upon every occasion and criticised by its opponents, its members ceased to meet after 1584. Almost half a century passed before a revival took place.

For some time, since the year 1629, a small circle of enthusiastic students was wont to meet at each other's homes for the study of French language and literature. From year to year its membership increased, and in 1634 Cardinal Richelieu proposed to the society to have their private status changed into a public institution, with many rights and privileges. Upon agreement by the society it was henceforth known as the French Academy, with a charter from Louis XIII. of January, 1635. It consisted then of forty members, the "forty immortals," and at no time and under no pressure whatsoever has this number been increased.

True it is, also, that here royal prerogative and personal intrigue often added an inferior member, while the far superior remained excluded, for whom popular indignation created the world known "forty-first seat." For a century and a half the academy held stated meetings until Aug. 5, 1793.—Argonaut.

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