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The BIRD FOOT-RACE Follies

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THE BIRD FOOT RACE
IN
FOLLIES

THE AUTHOR

THE BIRD FOOT RACE IN FOLLIES

By
Robert E. Samis

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Kansas City

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copy 2

QL676
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MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT

THESE COLOR PLATES OF BIRDS, SEVENTY-TWO IN ALL,
HAVE BEEN ARRANGED FOR THROUGH THE COUR-
TESY OF T. GILBERT PEARSON AND THE NATIONAL ASSO-
CIATION OF AUDUBON SOCIETIES, NEW YORK CITY.

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DEDICATED TO
MARGUERITE SAMIS
BOBBY HOSMER
JANICE HOSMER
ARTHUR V. SAMIS, Jr.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK

EPH 6/XII/24

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER

INTRODUCTION

This book has been written for the amusement and entertainment of children. It is full of educational features and also gives a short comic digest in which a large number of North American birds are represented as taking part in the race. (Web-footers are not included.) Many of the illustrations show the birds in their natural colors, combined with the Follies of the birds' foot race. The use of the race-track with race-track terms will be enjoyed by the grown-ups as well as the young.

MR. BROWN THRASHER

"I've been working for years
Other birds for to teach,
At last they have asked me,
To make a bird speech.

"The world has moved for ages,
And no one has ever heard
The first consideration of
Amusement for a bird.

"Many things have been talked of,
But none have taken place,
So now let's all decide and
Give a bird foot race.

"Being such an undertaking,
And to save enormous loss,
I believe it would be wise,
To make the Eagle boss.

"He has such a wide acquaintance
Over the entire land,
He would make all arrangements,
Even to the selecting of a band.

"We must make it interesting
By offering a good prize,
As when birds are on foot,
They are at a risk of their lives.

"A big bed of fat worms
Would be most tempting, they say,
So if that suits the Eagle
We will let it go that way.

"For a good entertainment
We will not be without,
We'll leave it to the Eagle
To bring it all about."

THE EAGLE

"I'm the Nation's old stand-by,
From the East to the West,
A companion to Old Glory,
The Flag that is best.

"On gold and silver money
I've been chosen for space,
I am proud of my makeup
That I can hold such a place.

"I just learned of the foot race
They are arranging for birds,
It sounds the most reasonable
Thing that I've heard.

"Birds have led no amusement
Since the landing of Noah's Ark,
And think this a grand opening
To give them a good start.

"For the whole information
I am quite at a loss,
I've just learned this morning
That I'm to be boss.

"I'll call all the birds
And then we will see
After due consultation
Who my officers will be.

"There's the Plover, the Magpie,
The gay black-wing Chickadee,
The Crow and the Raven
Would be good birds to help me.

"There are many more workers
That would be alright
But for a police bird,
I want one that can fight.

"To win the bird foot race
'Twould be a big gain.
I will give the judge-ship
To the old Sand-Hill Crane.

"The Parrot's make-up
And motions are slow,
The place for that bird
Is a job to say 'Go!'

"We need a good gate bird,
And one who won't shirk,
I wonder if we could get
The old Ostrich to work.

"Then the big Pelican
He works with great will,
He could carry the proceeds
Back home in his bill."

THE RACE-TRACK BAND

The Purple Finch and Crossbill
Will be in the grand stand
To help in the music and
Lead them in the band.

RED CROSSBILL

PURPLE FINCH

The Wren also will help them
As he's a "tee-wee,"
And for their assistant
We will have the Towhee.

We should have some good music,
We are judging, you see
From the music they give us
In the tops of the tree.

PURPLE GRACKLES

The Eagle says, on referring back,
Birds should be appointed to watch the track
That would be a job, all the officers think,
For the Purple Grackles and the Bobolink.

They could sell refreshments there as well,
Also have charge of the big bird hotel.
Birds that come a long way, for this race meet
Will need a bird hotel, where they all can eat.

BOBOLINK

THE CROW

“To the birds’ foot race I want to go,
As we are full of speed, you know.
I hope they let the blackbird in,
As one of us is sure to win.

“The Blackbird is my pal, you know,
That’s the reason I want him to go.
We are out in all kinds of weather,
As birds of a feather flock together.

“Did you hear the latest, I do declare
We are both to have a job out there.
As I heard the old Eagle say
He wants black help around that day.”

PIGEON

"Some of the other birds
I may have to release
As the old Eagle has made me
The big chief of police.

"He says keeping order
Is just a matter of form
And I won't have any trouble
In my new blue uniform.

"The most I do, anyway,
Is to stand around, look wise,
The worst of it all is,
I lose out on the prize.

"I'll have some assistant,
And one that is right
Will appoint the Sandpiper
As they all say he can fight."

BOB-WHITE

“I’m noted for speed when I run on the ground,
Around barns and hedge fences usually I’m found.
I’m a favorite of sportsmen when out on their boast,
When caught in their trap-nets they serve me on toast.

“To hide myself I grab up some leaves,
And turn on my back, then I am at ease;
The hunters pass, or the man with a gun,
Always expect that I’m still on the run.

“I’m out in the morning as soon as it’s light
Hunting my food and my song is ‘Bob-White.’
I nest in the bushes in some quiet place
Where I can leave my babies and go to the race.

“That birds’ foot race will be lots of fun,
For birds like me are good on the run;
I’ll do lots of practicing before I begin
And the best of it all is, I am going to win.”

DOVE

DOVE

“To go to the race
Would be against my religion,
As they might transform me
Back to an old Pigeon.

“There’ll be lots of excitement,
With plenty of fun
To make up a record
Of birds on the run.

“I would like to be there
In a quiet little spot
But don’t care whether
I enter or not.

“If they have any troubles
They can not release
I will use all my efforts
To help them make peace.”

BLUE JAY

BLUE JAY

"I hear there is going to be a great race.
But we have to go barefoot and at a fast pace.
I bet there will be an awful big throng,
And 'Tain't, Tain't, Tain't,' is my only song.

"My color is gorgeous, my feathers are soft;
But I never could make my home in a loft;
The kids they all like me, that's one very sure thing,
But the 'like' is all off when they once hear me sing!
'Tain't, Tain't, Tain't!"

MEADOWLARK

MEADOWLARK

“Hark, Hark, says the Meadowlark,
What’s that music I hear?
The race bells are ringing
And ringing out clear.

“I’ll be there in the morning
Before the races begin,
I wonder if they’ll let
All my children go in.

“I will see the old Eagle,
He’s always been square,
He may let babies in
By paying half fare.”

BARN SWALLOW

"I am known for my beauty
As I glide through the air;
I'm not much for a foot race,
As for that I don't care.

"There's lots of fandangos
Each year coming round,
But I always get frightened
When I'm down on the ground.

"I suppose that good-speed birds
Are the ones they are after,
I would be much more contented,
To stick close to the rafters.

"A foot race for birdies,
It will be lots of fun;
If the boss birds say so,
I'll go down and run."

BARN SWALLOW

The Western Meadowlark courting
the Orchard Oriole.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK.

ORCHARD ORIOLE

"Are you going to the races?
All birds for to see?
I would like to have you
To go along with me.

"I would like to see
All these birds on the throne
But I would rather stay here,
Than to go all alone.

"I'm a little bit choice
Of my company, you see,
And that is the reason,
I have picked upon thee."

THE NIGHTHAWK

“The old Owl is commenting on me,
That blind old bat, he never could see;
How he even can talk is a wonder to me.

“He steals for a living out of other birds’ nests.
So he is most hated by all the rest.
Wouldn’t we feel upset if he comes out the best?”

MRS. ROBIN

“In the spring of the year
We make the woods ring,
It’s a sign to the nation
The coming of spring

“We build nests near houses
Some birds say we are bold;
But it’s a sign to good children,
It’s not going to be cold.

“Our main food is fish worms
We pull out of the ground
In mowed lawns and gardens
They mostly are found.

“Sometimes we find big ones,
Most too big to eat,
But we manage to pull them
Apart with our feet.

“We are first to have babies
In our dear little place,
And I sure want to take them
To the birds’ foot race.

“For those little babies
’Twill be lots of fun,
For mama and papa
Are both going to run.”

WARBLER

THE WARBLER AND SPARROW

"Shall we leave our home,
In this dear little spot
To join in the foot races,
Whether we win or not?"

"Well, come A. V. Junior,
With eyes so brown,
Let's look up the route
To this new race ground.

"Our time it is limited,
The nests are so sweet
It's hard to arrange
With birds for a meet

"So let's hurry along
We must know by to-morrow,
That's not very much time
For the Warbler and Sparrow."

SPARROW

RED WINGED BLACKBIRD

THE RED WINGED BLACKBIRD

"They call me a Blackbird,
Yet my wings are red,
And about my make-up
A great deal is said.

"When I'm at the races
There'll be one nice thing:
If they need a red flag
I'll just raise my wing."

THE WREN

"I'm just practicing the music
That we'll have in the band,
Expect it will be heard
Over the entire land.

"If they arrange to have radios
For the race to broadcast,
Our music will be heard
By the whole world at last."

WREN

INDIGO BUNTING

“Che-Wee, Chee-Wee. Che-Wee,” singing up in a tree,
 Marguerite says, ‘Mama, come quick and see
 The pretty little birdie is looking at me.’
 “Chee-Wee, Chee-Wee, Chee-Wee.”

Says Marguerite to Mama and Papa, too
 “Do you think that little Chee-Wee Bird will do
 To have a very little quiet place
 In Grandpa’s book of the birds’ foot race?”

THE HUMMINGBIRD

“Do you think it would be out of place
For me to enter the birds’ foot race?
To win it would be easy, you see
If I only had the entrance fee.

“Birds can’t have just what they choose,
But I might get in on carrying the news.
You see I am small and not very fat
I might get something to eat out of that.”

THE HAWK

"I soar high up to the skies,
And keep close watch with my good eyes;
When there's a field mouse down below,
That is when I soar so low.
I do like the mouse's meat
It keeps me looking so sleek and neat.

"The birds' foot race I want to see.
I wonder what the prize will be.
The race I don't know much about,
And don't know where to find it out.
I'll fly to Bird Town and see
What the program is going to be."

KILLDEER

KILLDEER

"I could win that race, I have no fear:
But you know the habits of a Killdeer,
I always pretended that I was lame
So to go in the race would ruin my name.

"I look for a hole in the ground to nest,
Which is seldom found by any of the rest.
I lay four eggs with the pointed end down
That's why I prefer to nest in the ground.

"I have already told you my very own name;
But not my object in appearing so lame
I'm quite sure with me you will agree
That by pretending to be lame I get sympathy.

"As for me, I don't think I will wrinkle my face,
To wear my sweet little life out running a race,
You see I am doubting and can't see the joke,
Of getting so dusty that I'm ready to choke.

"Now, good birdie, just take my advice for this once,
Don't run in the race and act like a dunce.
I intend to be there, to see all the fun,
But have no desire to be among those who run."

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

"I'm a gay-looking fellow,
And as gay as I look,
I wonder if I can hold
My place in this book.

"I never have had trouble
In holding my place,
And don't think I will have
In the birds' foot race.

"Yes, I'm a Woodpecker
But that's no disgrace,
I've pecked and I've pecked
Until I'm red in the face.

"For all the small birdies;
They can't make me budge,
As the old Eagle told me
I could assist to the Judge."

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

HOUSE WREN

"Do you think I'm big enough
to play in the band?"

HOUSE FINCH

"This is sure a pretty page,
A regular birdland."

CHIMNEY SWIFT

"I cannot go to the races
And leave this pretty nest."

SHORT-EARED OWL

"My mama says I can go,
But she don't think it best."

CARDINAL

“There are birds of all colors,
Black, blue, and lead.
I’ve always been partial
To the color of red.

“It’s one colour of our Flag.
The blue is, too,
Which makes up the folds
Of the Red, White, and Blue.

“The Flag we will use,
In some proper place,
To announce the starting
Of the birds’ foot race.”

WE PURPLE MARTINS

'Wonder where the birds' foot race is going to take place?
Think that should be considered in this big race.
Near an Audubon bird lodge would be the best,
Then after the races we could stay there and rest.

'When we are at the races we'll be on the ground;
And at the bird lodges there'll be no cats around,
Bird lovers are not particular about the mice and rats
But are sure sudden death to the bird-catching cats.

"If we stick close to a bird lodge there's plenty to eat;
We need not worry about being thrown out in the street,
Bird lovers feed us on sweet cake made from honey
and grain
And all birds that play at bird lodges get treated the same.

"Song birds as a hobby, it would sure make you laugh;
There are many places in bird lodge to feed and to bath,
They also have shelter houses that I cannot explain
Just the thing for birdies to go in when it rains.

"We Purple Martins are fond of the bird lodgment
And with all other birds that chatter and sing
We go to the far south in the cold, cold winter
But return to the bird lodgments each spring."

PURPLE MARTIN

TUFTED TITMOUSE

“If I find what I am looking for
I will have something to eat.
Don’t you think my pose and color
Are both very neat?”

“I am going to the foot race
Arranged for the birds
If I can’t get first prize
Will try to get third.”

“If I lose out on all prizes
I will still have my house
Which is still very good
For a little Titmouse.”

CHICKADEE

"The ground was all white with snow one day
Janice and Bobby were busy at play.
I was singing near by in a Christmas tree,
Making my song out of 'Chic-a-dee-dee.'

"I had not been chirping that way very long,
When Janice heard me so loud with my song.
'Oh, Bobby, come to the window and see
The sweet little bird chirping "Chic-a-dee-dee."'

"I think that I would be much out of place
If I tried to enter 'Baba's bird foot race.'
My feet are so small and toes they turn in.
So there's no reason at all that I could hope to win."

TOWHEE

"I'll try to do my part
In the grandstand,
Have been chosen by Eagle
To sing in the band.

"Music does not worry us
If the race depends on that,
As we all have good music
Right under our hat."

THE PHOEBE

"I would like to go to the foot race
And be with the rest,
But how can I do so and
Leave my dear nest?"

"Papa says he must go.
I will help get him a place.
As they will surely want a Phœbe
In the birds' foot race.

"If he don't win a prize
I know he can sing,
We will continue to live
And make the woods ring."

THE KING 'O THEM ALL

"I'm the King of Birds, so they all declare,
I fight on the ground and I fight in the air.
Am never contented from morn until night
Unless I am the winner of a big bird fight.

"I will enter myself in the birds' foot race.
There'll be no question but I'll hold my place.
I have the entrance fee to pay my toll,
Am going to try to get next to the pole.

"If they have any trouble keeping the birds in line,
I will help the Police Bird and be there on time.
There is one thing about that race I can't see:
Why they did not give that police job to me.

"They said they were sure I could handle it right.
But they were afraid I'd do nothing but fight.
That's an awful career for a bird, all right,
But I'll end up my days and continue to fight."

THE MOCKINGBIRD

"I'm the world's famous singer, the gay Mockingbird:
And can mock any song I ever have heard.
I sing in the mornings and whistle at night,
And to make the world happy is my chief delight.

"I'll wake in the morning and go to the race:
But as mocking that day will be out of place,
I'll have to quit mocking, and get down and run,
And then I am sure I'll miss none of the fun."

REDSTART

"I'm shy of those foot races,
And will tell you why,
As the birds all tell me
We dare not fly.

"I am going to go, and sit close by,
Will not enter if I cannot fly.
I love to fly, and love to sing,
A race on the ground is another thing."

THE VEERY

"Believe I could run
If I could get a good place,
Would like to have the honor
Of winning that foot race.

"The prize is worth having,
Is my only good thought,
For a nice bed of worms
That are all ready caught."

THE PARTRIDGE

"I know I'm a Partridge.
Some say I'm a Grouse.
Don't care what they call me.
Just stay away from my house.

"I've heard much about races,
And do want to go,
To show them my speed
That none of them know.

"Am sure I will win
If everything's right; . .
I'm afraid of no one
Except Sir Bob White."

SCARLET TANAGER

“Just received information, that came at the last,
That all the race news would be surely broadcast
On all the radios from far and from near,
So that absent birds can all plainly hear.

“From all the news that I’ve heard of late,
The great birds’ foot race will be up to date,
The Eagle and Thrush are working it so
The race will be broadcast by quick radio.

“To the Eagle and Brown Thrasher
I am not much relation,
But would like to have charge
Of the broadcasting station.”

RAVEN

THE WISE OLD RAVEN

"The wise old Raven,
Very popular you know,
That's why good people
Rave over me so.

"You have all heard the fable:
If you would stop to think
When I dropped in the pebbles
To get me a drink.

"In my lifetime I have been
In a great many places.
But never did they have
Any birds' foot races.

"I am going out to Bird Town some day,
To see what other birds have to say.
If birds of the town are talking race
I will enter in time to get a good place."

THE KINGFISHER

"I perch on limbs on a bank
Near a lake or a brook;
Spend my time catching fish
Without the use of a hook.

"I love to catch fish
But I have to keep still,
Then I dive into the water
Bring them out with my bill.

"I am going to the races,
To see the birds on the throne,
But I cannot leave my babies
As they will not stay alone.

"I will give them my promise,
And leave them my best wish
That when I return
I'll catch them some fish."

THE KINGFISHER

THE KINGLET

"Our native color is orange and black
We hunt for our living on sunny banks.
Sometimes there are brooks below,
But that makes no difference
With our hunting, you know.

"A few weak chips, chirps, and trills
Echo from the near-by hills;
We may move from this pretty place
If we should win the prize
At the birds' foot race."

THE KINGLET

THE ORIOLE MAKES ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FLICKER

THE ORIOLE

"Cuk, Cuk, Cuk, Quit-U, Quit-U,
That's a pretty home you have up there.
But with mine it don't compare,
Yours is only a hole in a tree
Mine is up high so no one can see.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE

FLICKER

"If you will go with me to the birds' foot race,
I'll take you to my pretty place.
I hate to go there all alone,
When I am so far away from home."

THE FLICKER

"There will be scores and scores
Of pretty birds there.
But with you and me
They will not compare.

"I expect some of them will be very slow,
That is one reason you should go.
The races you will love to see.
Be sure you do not disappoint me."

ROSEATE SPOONBILL

“Am much interested in the races,
Although I am very slow,
They have chosen King Parrot
For the bird to say ‘Go!’

“I talk in my own language,
But few birds understand,
For in my own country
Am the pride of the land.

“When I first heard of the race,
Thought I would have a good run,
But after thinking it over,
May go just for the fun.

“Would much like to be present,
If I can get there on time,
The long distance I travel
Is no fault of mine.”

ROSEATE SPOONBILL

THE WHIP-POOR-WILL

"I'm the well-known Whip-Poor-Will
And all I eat goes through my bill.

"I don't eat much for all of that;
So it's very hard for me to get fat.

"I notice the old Owl has mentioned me,
As I am about the only bird he gets to see.

"I often stay out late at night.
And that's the time he makes his flight.

"We'll all meet at the birds' foot race,
The Owl will be there with his pretty face."

GOLDFINCH

“The whole world is my admirer,
With my make up de luxe,
Clear back to the days
Of our Old King Tut.

“Just had a talk with the Eagle,
And the Brown Thrasher, too,
They told me of the races
They were going to put through.

“They were very much excited,
And had only a little time
But said that most all the birds
Would surely fall in line.

“With all my style and fashion
I am right in the lead.
Up to date in all ways.
But never tested for speed.

“They said the Quail and Partridge
Were both good on the run,
Also the Crow, Robin, and Jay,
Said it would be lots of fun.

“I am going to watch them
To see who will beat,
And I want to go early
To get a good seat.”

GOLDFINCH

THE OWL

“That foot race by birds is of interest to me,
But the worst of it is, I can not see,
Am sure I could win the foot race all right
If I could get them to pull it off in the night.

“Whoo Hoo, Hoo. Wouldn’t that be fun;
For me to watch the other birds run?
They all would have to carry a light
As none of them can see his way in the night.

“The Nighthawk claims that he can see,
But that claim of his never bothers me,
The proof of the pudding is chewing the string,
For me to see at night is one sure thing.

“The Whip-Poor-Will stays out late,
As catching night flies is his fate;
He flies up high and loops the loop;
But for me I’ll take the chicken coop.”

THE OWL

CATBIRD

"I love all the surroundings
Of which our country is made,
Even the twigs in my nest
And my four greenish-blue eggs.

"My song is a medley,
And quite sweet at that,
I can mimic most anything,
Even the call of a cat.

"I am going to the races,
After all's said and done,
As I have a real bird hunch
That I am good on the run.

"If I should come out the winner,
Get my name on the prize,
Wouldn't that be a record
And make birds open their eyes?"

Courtesy American Museum of Natural History, New York City

MRS. PELICAN

MRS. PELICAN

“At the race I’ll be known as Mrs. Pelican;
My bill holds more than my stomach can,
I hold enough in my beak to last me a week,
Other birds don’t see how I ever can.

“I’m not like the old lady Hubbard;
I always have plenty of food in my cupboard,
For my babies that wait on the shore,
They are contented to wait, though often late,
As they know I will bring them some more.”

Courtesy American Museum of Natural History, New York City

EAGLE

THE EAGLE SAYS HE IS READY

"The race track is ready, my work is all done,
For the national race that's going to be run,
We have had entries, not recorded in this book,
As there are a few birds we have to overlook.

"There were some foreign birds that tried to get in,
But we were a little afraid some of them might win,
We will challenge all nations when this race is o'er,
For the bird in the winning will want to run more.

"Making ready the race was a most encouraging part,
As most all birds helped me right from the start,
The Parrot was unmoveable and dreadfully slow,
But he was the only bird that could really say 'Go'."

THE STORK AND ITS CARES

“Would much like to see
That foot race for birds
It will be most interesting to all
But under my assignment to babies
I am most subject to call.

“Birds all say I should be there
Not knowing I have other cares
I am so busy working night times
I could not spare time to be there.

“With the mother’s patient waiting
Through the days of outstretched arms
Then for me to attend the races
Their great attraction has no charms.

“The Little Fairies would all miss me,
Through the night, so clear and fair,
With the Angels hovering around them;
No, cannot spare time to be there.”

RED-RUMPED TANAGER

"I looked all around
For my babies a place;
Was unable to find one,
So we all go to the race."

Courtesy American Museum of Natural History, New York City

MR. OSTRICH

“With those small birds it’s hard to *mix*;
As for a foot race they would come out nix
If it’s for speed they want to rely,
I’ll take the ground and let them fly.

“The Eagle says, all things he wants to regulate
So has appointed me to attend the gate.
There are many other jobs I would prefer
But he has already made me Of-fi-cer.

“If any of those speed birds show up late
I sure am going to close the gate,
As I have longed with my heart’s desire
To watch those little birds come under the wire.”

WOOD PEWEE

"I've looked through the rules
While in Bird Town to-day.
There is nothing on record
Against my running this way.

"I don't think other birds
Will stand much of a show,
As I will be there on time,
Ready for the word 'Go.'

"The only thing I'm afraid of,
Or could worry about,
The Police Bird and Eagle
Might both rule me out.

"I'm going to go anyhow:
All the birds I will lead,
If they don't rule me out
I will show them some speed."

BIRDS GOING TO THE RACES

Courtesy American Museum of Natural History, New York City

PARROT

PARROT

"I'll come," said the Parrot,
 "At my very slow pace.
 I have been chosen by the Eagle
 To say 'Go' at the race.

"I've been a favorite among children
 For a great many long years,
 And no word gets by me
 But what stays in my ears.

"A great many birds chirp me
 For my very slow walk,
 But I am the only bird
 That can really talk."

READY TO START

Courtesy American Museum of Natural History, New York City

JUDGE CRANE

"I am ever old faithful Judge Crane.
Every day seems to bring me more fame.
Will take my place at the birds' foot race,
And hereafter be known as Judge Crane."

THE WINNER OF THE PRIZE

“Need I say that I’m proud?
You can read it in my face;
They are shouting aloud
That I’ve won the foot race.

“Come down to the brookside
I very much thirst
To tell all my kinfolds
That I came out first.

“Our old friend the Owl
Of course, couldn’t see.
Not knowing that all eyes
Were turned toward me.

“So he shouted again, ‘Ho. Ho. Whoo’;
Says the Partridge to me,
They’re shouting
‘ ’Tis you, ’tis you’;

“Now this is the most pleasing
Part of the tale;
To hear Judge Crane shout
‘The winner, Quail, Quail!’

“With modest mien and grace profound
I’ll accept the prize fresh from the ground.
While my appetite calls not for worms
I’m always fearful of catching germs.

“However, I’ll take it, ’twill
Not make me vain
And I’ll divide with my neighbors
In exchange for grain.”

TREE SPARROW

“To have won that race
Would have been a sure thing
If I had not tumbled down
And broken my wing.

“Now I’m all crippled up,
As you can plainly see,
And will stay a long time
In the Hospital Tree.”

KINGBIRD COMMENTS ON THE RACE

“When the race first started
I was right in the lead,
And when that Quail passed me
He was showing some speed.

“He must have been practicing
A long time in advance,
Couldn’t see where other birds
Had much of a chance.

“There were some birds that passed me,
I think Partridge and Thrush,
But I would not be sure
As I saw nothing but dust.

“I think ’twould have been better
For all birds in the town
If they made some arrangements
And had the track sprinkled down.

“The Crow made a good showing
And the Blackbird as well;
But lots of birds I lost track of
Even Judge Crane couldn’t tell.

“I was very much interested
In the movement of the Hawk
He was much overrated
And could do nothing but walk.

“Now, back to the mountains
I’ll make my home flight
And be content with the foot race
But hold my record for fights.”

RED-RUMPED TANAGER

“When I got to the races
Could not find any bed
So I’m taking my babies
Back to their home dead.

“The track got so dusty
Their walks were so narrow
I am taking my babies back
In a little wheelbarrow.

“When this is all over
A new life I will begin
But I’ll never take babies
To foot races again.”

ENGLISH SPARROW

"The torture that I suffered,
Oh, nobody knows,
I couldn't keep those
Speed birds from stepping on my toes.

"Then the Police Bird
Got up on his ear,
When I asked for protection.
Now wasn't that queer?"

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

“Who ever started that foot race for bird?
Such an unreasonable thing no one ever heard;
Guess they thought we would do anything for a prize
Even go to the extreme of risking our lives.”

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH

“In the birds’ foot race
I was away back behind,
Now I have such a headache
I’m afraid I’ll go blind.”

“The Parrot talked so much
Before he could say ‘Go’
I knew right from the start
I wouldn’t stand any show.”

“Then the Assistant Police
Took up the whole track
When I got to the front
He would yell ‘Stand back.’ ”

ALASKAN LONGSPUR

“What was the trouble with the Parrot?
I guess we will never know.
He strutted around the grandstand
And kept yelling ‘Go, Go.’

“It made such a confusion
With all the birds on the track,
We went straight to the Eagle
To get our entrance fee back.

“Then we went to the grandstand
To listen to the band,
The music was so catching
We just took a hand.”

SNOW BUNTING

"The balance of my life
Will be an awful loss
To know why the Eagle
Made such a poor boss.

"The partiality he showed
Will make a lot of talk
For I caught him whispering
To both the Quail and the Hawk.

"But there's no use a-talking
We all had lots of fun
And that little old Quail bird
Was sure good on the run."

SNOWY EGRET

"I saw a lot of birds there
A-playing in the dirt,
There was one or two of them
That was trying to flirt.

"I sure was watching them
For the stride they laid
And was keeping a close watch
On my dear little maid."

WOOD THRUSH

WOOD THRUSH

“Where was the old Ostrich?
He must have been late,
As I did not notice
Any one at the gate.

“I do think the old Eagle
Overlooked the size of his hat
To appoint for a Gate Bird
A big buffer like that.”

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

“We were over at the Bird Hospital
Just sitting around the edge,
There were many birds there
Who had broken their legs.

“The old Eagle was there,
So the other birds said,
But he felt so bad
He was going to bed.

“I’m going after Dr. Bird
Do you suppose he will come?
I don’t think he will,
As he told us not to run.”

CEDAR WAX WING

“Did you hear the sad news
Of what happened to the Plover?
He got all crippled up
We think it will last him for ever.

“I’m glad the races are over,
And all excitement like that,
As being down on the ground
Makes my heart go pit-pat.”

VARIED THRUSH

“We got so disgusted
When we commenced to get wise,
We lost all interest
In who got the prize.

“Then that big Ostrich
Was only loafing around,
He thinks because he’s big,
He can run the whole town.

“With all my experience,
Of standing in line
When I go to a race again
It’ll be a long time.

“I talked to the Police Bird
And tried to make peace,
He just ruffled up his feathers
And said ‘I’m the Police.’”

BLUEBIRD

BLUEBIRD

“Oh, that awful foot race
That I went to see,
Such performance for birds
Was a wonder to me.

“I never did think that
Birds could be so rude,
And there are many of them
That I could include.

“Then Judge Crane, and the Eagle
For good order they bid,
But each of them acted
Like a naughty kid.”

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK

“We stood around the race-track
Trying to find some shade.
Came nearly getting intoxicated
On their red lemonade.

“‘Will you have another sip,’
Says the Bobolink,
‘You look very thirsty,
We like to see you drink.’

“Then the dear old Grackles
Were very sociable, too,
They were good help for Eagle
In putting the races through.”

RED-EYED VIREO

"I lost out on the race prize,
For a good meal was my hunch,
Guess now I will be satisfied
With a very light lunch."

"That was a good prize
Don't care what they say
But before I could get to it
The worms all crawled away."

ANTHONY'S TOWHEE

YELLOW PTARMIGAN

"The Follies foot races
Made such a big hit
All the birds in town
Are talking about it yet.

"Such performance for birds
Has never before been seen,
It should now be reproduced
Upon the movie screen.

"It would please all children;
And most grown-ups, too,
For the whole wide world
It would circle all through.

"They all would be waiting,
From each known place,
For the show on the screen
Of the 'Birds' Foot Race.'"

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD

“That foot race for birds,
After all’s been said and done,
Has proven to the nation
That birds can really run.

“It was sure good amusement
To which we all agree
That now we should arrange
To have more fun in the tree.

“The old Eagle has appointed me
As a committee of one
To look into the bird world
And see what can be done.

“If every grove had bird houses
Now wouldn’t that be fine?
It would give us protection
At either end of the line.

“Nature’s storms are so destructive
To song birds and their nests,
We all need help and protection
From the East into the West.”

THE SANDPIPER

“That foot race in follies
Made us all so much sport.
Would like to have been at a distance,
To receive the radio’s report.

“There was so much dust
In the race-track’s path
We came down to the beach
To take a good bath.

“All the birds in the band
Did their work very well
Also the Bobolink and Grackles
Who had charge of the hotel.

“Would like to have been in the race,
Believe I could have set them a pace,
But the old Eagle insisted
That I help out the Police.”

SANDPIPER

BUSH-TIT

“All the birds are so merry and cheerful
And no one do they ever molest,
The happiest time in the Woodland
Is when one is building its nest.

“They need lots of care and protection
From the hearts of the worst and the best,
So let's all join in together
And help the bird in protecting its nest.

“Good children should be the teachers
For bad children and some of the rest,
And when they find a little bird in trouble
Play soldier and take care of its nest.

“With this combined all will be happy
The birds as well as the rest
Then you listen to the chatter at sunrise
And the sweet song that comes from the nest.”

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