The White Rabbit had come back. Evidently, the Duchess had forgiven him for his tardiness, as he was quite cheerful. ("Which is a blessing," thought Alice to herself, "for now, perhaps, he will not be so nervous.")

He had just started to explain to her the reason for the Mock Turtle's secret sorrow, when a terrible uproar broke out, apparently from just over the hill. "Come on," motioned the White Rabbit, "they are at it again." Seizing Alice by the hand, he pattered swiftly up the hill and down the other side. Here there was a good-sized piece of ground, much larger than the Queen's croquet ground, entirely surrounded by a low fence. As they tiptoed up and looked over the fence, Alice saw that the ground was divided into squares, some white and some black. The black squares were all empty, but on and across some of the white squares there was a multitude of birds, beasts, and fishes, with others occupied by men and women, and many different objects. Some of them were standing upright while others were lying on the ground, and they all seemed to be joined together in a most perplexing manner.

"What a very curious place," commented Alice, as they began walking slowly along the fence. "What are all these creatures doing in there?"

"This is the Queen's Crossword Puzzle Park," replied the White Rabbit. "It is the very latest fad. It has been very popular for quite a good long time with the boneheads, and now the crowned heads have taken it up."

As Alice looked more closely, she saw that all the creatures and objects in the Park were formed of letters spelling their names, and that each one was provided with a sort of garment or covering, in some cases quite thin and gauzy, so that it could easily be seen through, in other cases almost impenetrable. "What are those cloaks that they seem to have?" she inquired.

"Oh, those are their Definitions," expatiated the White Rabbit. "They have to have them to hide in when the Solvers come. If they didn't, the Solvers would take them away and Solvers don't go and the EMU a from the library."

The White Rabbit then told Alice that from the Park a peculiar noise came from the corner, Alice another noise came from hind himself to most doleful cry.

"It's the EMU usual today."

"And so would she shrank a bit Puzzle day after day and it isn't much as they do other scream, the Alice was much she queried the the time, does it?

"Oh, don't pi isn't nearly as As they turned standing on his an EEL and was please," she stated.

"But I don't here just the same I know half the the days I am comp like fish, or a a black slipper!"

Wiping her her deeply), Alice for with one eye on their square fine-looking ma

"He, too, is always Alice and the presenty observer seemed quite do why they were
"AMARANTH"

The Duchess had forgiven him for "the blessing," thought Alice to herself, as she passed, looking over the fence, for the Mock Turtle's secret garden was just over the hill.

Alice, along with many others, occupied some of the white squares on the croquet ground, eagerly hoping that the Queen's turn would be next. She watched as the White Rabbit took his turn, trying to be joined together in a square, but Alice noticed that they began walking slowly along the fence, starting to circle on their squares, uttering the most sorrowful cries.

"It's the EMU," shrugged the White Rabbit, "He seems to be more vicious than usual today."

"And so would you be vicious," shrieked the EMU, "if you were kept in a Crossword Puzzle day after day and never allowed out. Besides that,"—and the EMU turned to glare at the smaller bird once more—"they have given my tail to the YUNX today and it isn't fair. It is really the GNU's turn, but they don't use him half as much as they do me; and now to be linked with a YUNX! Ugh!" And with another scream, the EMU dashed his bill angrily and sank to the ground.

Alice was much distressed. "Why do they impose on the poor thing that way?" she queried the White Rabbit. "It doesn't seem fair to make him stay in there all the time, does it?"

"Oh, don't pay any attention to him," the White Rabbit reassured Alice. "He hasn't nearly as much to complain of as the EEL. There he is, sobbing right now."

As they turned the corner and looked over the fence, Alice saw an old EEL standing on his tail and weeping bitterly. She had never had any conversation with an EEL and was in some doubt as to the proper way of consoling him. "If you please," she started—

"But I don't please," sobbed the EEL; "I don't please at all, but they keep me here just the same. More than that, they keep changing my Definition until I don't know half the time who I really am. My scientific name is ANGUILLA, but some days I am compelled to pose as an apodal fish, or as an elongated fish, or a snake-like fish, or a lamprey, or a moray; I have even been forced to masquerade as a black slipper."

Wiping her eyes (she was most tender-hearted and the EEL's plight had moved her deeply), Alice noticed that the EEL's grief seemed to be generally contagious, for with one exception, all the creatures got up and began circling slowly about on their squares, uttering the most mournful cries. The exception was a large, fine-looking man with a shining face. "That is RA," explained the White Rabbit. "He, too, is always in here, but he is used to it now and never complains."

Alice and the White Rabbit resumed their stroll along the fence, and Alice presently observed a number of tiny creatures wearing dunce caps. All of them seemed quite downcast and so unattractive in appearance that Alice wondered why they were there.
"Those," said the White Rabbit in answer to Alice's timid question, "are the Abbreviations, Prefixes, and Suffixes. They really don't belong here at all, but they get in occasionally—like weeds in a garden, you know."

They walked on. "Look!" the White Rabbit suddenly exclaimed, "now you'll see some fun!" As he spoke, Alice was surprised to see a number of queer-looking objects come running up to the fence, peering eagerly into the enclosure. All of them had long, pointed noses and very large, prominent eyes. Every once in a while, one of them would reach over the fence and drag the Definition off a word, whereupon all the rest shrieked their delight.

"Those are the Solvers," explained the White Rabbit. "Now you know why the words must have Definitions: so that the Solvers won't get them all. They capture a good many as it is."

Just then, their attention was attracted by loud screaming from a distance. The White Rabbit looked apprehensively over his shoulder. "It's the Queen," he whispered to Alice, twitching his whiskers nervously, "and she's obviously cross again."

It appeared to Alice that the Queen must be very cross, indeed, for she was shrieking "Off with his head!" every few seconds. A dead silence had fallen over the Park—not a word was to be heard.

"They are all scared to death," confided the White Rabbit. "They are afraid of being beheaded. Even the EMU, with all his troubles, wouldn't like that, since it would change his nationality."

"What would he then become?" inquired Alice.

"Why," said the White Rabbit, "he's an Australian, and if he lost his head, he'd turn into the 12th letter of the Greek alphabet."

"Oh, yes, I see," replied Alice. She really didn't see it at all, but considered it more polite to pretend that she did.

Actually, Alice thought the whole matter extremely confusing, and as her head was starting to ache, she proposed that they walk back to the daisy bank.

On their way, the White Rabbit told her that, after having heard the Queen, she could well understand why the enclosure was called a Cross Word Puzzle Park.

"Yes," agreed Alice, "I imagine they are described as crosswords because they belong to the Queen and she is so cross, but where is the sense in it all?"

"Ah!" ejaculated the White Rabbit, as he hurriedly glanced at his watch and pulled on his kid gloves, "that, my dear, is the puzzle!"

And with a parting twitch of his whiskers, he popped down the rabbit hole under the hedge.

A FOREIGN MENU

If you happen to be a gourmet trying to learn the Romanian language, you will be entranced by this bit of conversation:

AŞĂ ? OI, TAP SĂLBATIC, UNCROP, SOS, PORC, NUCI ? . . . TABLA SPĂTIOAŞĂ!

("Is that right? Sheep, wild goat, mulled wine, sauce, pork, walnuts? . . . A capacious tray!"

What fascinates us about these particular comments is that they form a 47-letter palindrome, reading the same backward as forward.

WORD WAYS