

# THE "ETHICS OF PIG"

(Continued from first page)

romping into town and pounding the Belgian blocks with their hand pegged sabots as artless and arbitrary as an extra session of a Datto Bryan drama. I never pass a circus without pulling the valve cord and coming down for a little Key West money, so I engaged a couple of rooms and board for Rufe and me at a house near the circus grounds run by a widow lady named Peevy. Then I took Rufe to a clothing store and gents' outfitted him. He showed up strong, as I knew he would, after he was rigged up in the ready-made rutabaga regalia. Me and old Misfitzky stuffed him into a bright blue suit with a Nile green visible plaid effect and riveted on a fancy vest of a light Tuskegee normal tan color, a red necktie and the yellowest pair of shoes in town. They were the first clothes Rufe had ever worn except the gingham layette and the butternut top dressing of his native kraal, and he looked as self-conscious as an Igorrote with a new nose ring.

"That night I went down to the circus tents and opened a small shell game. Rufe was to be the capper. I gave him a roll of phony currency to bet with and kept a bunch of it in a special pocket to pay his winnings out of. No, I didn't mistrust him, but I simply can't manipulate the ball to lose when I see real money bet. My fingers go on a strike every time I try it.

"I set up my little table and began to show them how easy it was to guess which shell the little pea was under. The unlettered hinds gathered in a thick semicircle and began to nudge elbows and banter one another to bet. Then was when Rufe ought to have singlefooted up and called the turn on the little joker for a few tens and fives to get them started. But no Rufe. I'd seen him two or three times walking about and looking at the sideshow pictures with his mouth full of peanut candy, but he never came nigh.

"The crowd piked a little, but trying to work the shells without a capper is like fishing without bait. I closed the game with only \$42 of the unearned increment, while I had been counting on yanking the yeomen for \$200 at least. I went home at 11 and went to bed. I supposed that the circus had proved too alluring for Rufe and that he had succumbed to it, concert and all, but I meant to give him a lecture on general business principles in the morning.

"Just after Morpheus had got both my shoulders to the shuck mattress I hears a houseful of unbecoming and ribald noises, like a youngster screeching with green apple colic. I opens my door and calls out in the hall for the widow lady, and when she sticks her head out I says, 'Mrs. Peevy, ma'am, would you mind choking off that kid of yours so that honest people can get their rest?'

"'Sir,' says she, 'it's no child of mine. It's the pig squealing that your friend Mr. Tatum brought home to his room a couple of hours ago. And if you are uncle or second cousin or brother to it I'd appreciate your stopping its mouth, sir, yourself if you please.'

"I put on some of the polite outside habiliments of external society and went into Rufe's room. He had got up and lit his lamp and was pouring some milk into a tin pan on the floor for a dingy white, half grown, squealing pig.

"'How is this, Rufe?' says I. 'You flimflammed in your part of the work tonight and put the game on crutches. And how do you explain the pig? It looks like backsliding to me.'

"'Now don't be too hard on me, Jeff,' says he. 'You know how long I've been used to stealing shoats. It's got to be a habit with me. And to-

night, when I see such a fine chance. I couldn't help takin' it.'

"'Well,' says I, 'maybe you've really got kleptopigia. And maybe when we get out of the pig belt you'll turn your mind to higher and more remunerative misconduct. Why you should want to stain your soul with such a distasteful, feeble minded, perverted, roaring beast as that I can't understand.'

"'Why, Jeff,' says he, 'you ain't in sympathy with shoats. You don't understand 'em like I do. This here seems to me to be an animal of more than common powers of ration and intelligence. He walked half across the room on his hind legs awhile ago.'

"'Well, I'm going back to bed,' says I. 'See if you can impress it upon your friend's ideas of intelligence that he's not to make so much noise.'

"'He was hungry,' says Rufe. 'He'll go to sleep and keep quiet now.'

"I always get up before breakfast and read the morning paper whenever I happen to be within the radius of a Hoe cylinder or a Washington hand press. The next morning I got up early and found the Lexington daily on the front porch where the carrier had thrown it. The first thing I saw in it was a double column ad. on the front page that read like this:

## FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD.

The above amount will be paid, and no questions asked, for the return, alive and uninjured, of Beppo, the famous European educated pig, that strayed or was stolen from the slide show tents of Binkley Bros. circus last night.

GEO. B. TAPLEY,

Business Manager, at the Circus Grounds.

"I folded up the paper flat, put it into my inside pocket and went to Rufe's room. He was nearly dressed and was feeding the pig the rest of the milk and some apple peelings.

"'Well, well, well, good morning all,' I says, hearty and amiable. 'So we are up? And piggy is having his breakfast. What had you intended doing with that pig, Rufe?'

"'I'm going to crate him up,' says Rufe, 'and express him to ma in Mount Nebo. He'll be company for her while I am away.'



"Why, Jeff, you ain't in sympathy with shoats."

"'He's a mighty fine pig,' says I, scratching him on the back.

"'You called him a lot of names last night,' says Rufe.

"'Oh, well,' says I, 'he looks better

to me this morning. I was raised on a farm, and I'm very fond of pigs. I used to go to bed at sundown, so I never saw one by lamplight before.

Tell you what I'll do, Rufe,' I says. 'I'll give you \$10 for that pig.'

"'I reckon I wouldn't sell this shoat,' says he. 'If it was any other one I might.'

"'Why not this one?' I asked, fearful that he might know something.

"'Why, because,' says he, 'it was the grandest achievement of my life. There ain't airy other man that could have done it. If I ever have a fireside and children I'll sit beside it and tell 'em how their daddy toted off a shoat from a whole circus full of people. And maybe my grandchildren too. They'll certainly be proud a whole passel. Why,' says he, 'there was two tents, one openin' into the other. This shoat was on a platform tied with a little chain. I seen a giant and a lady with a fine chance of bushy white hair in the other tent. I got the shoat and crawled out from under the canvas again without him squeakin' as loud as a mouse. I put him under my coat, and I must have passed a hundred folks before I got out where the streets was dark. I reckon I wouldn't sell that shoat, Jeff. I'd want ma to keep it, so there'd be a witness to what I done.'

"'The pig won't live long enough,' I says, 'to use as an exhibit in your senile fireside mendacity. Your grandchildren will have to take your word for it. I'll give you \$100 for the animal.'

"Rufe looked at me astonished. 'The shoat can't be worth anything like that to you,' he says. 'What do you want him for?'

"'Viewing me casuistically,' says I, with a rare smile, 'you wouldn't think that I've got an artistic side to my temper. But I have. I'm a collector of pigs. I've scoured the world for unusual pigs. Over in the Wabash valley I've got a hog ranch with most every specimen on it, from a Merino to a Poland China. This looks like a blooded pig to me, Rufe,' says I. 'I believe it's a genuine Berkshire. That's why I'd like to have it.'

"'I'd shore like to accommodate you,' says he, 'but I've got the artistic temperament too. I don't see why it ain't art

when you can steal a shoat better than anybody else can. Shoats is a kind of inspiration and genius with me. Specially this one. I wouldn't take two hundred and fifty for that animal.'

"'Now listen,' says I, wiping off my forehead. 'It's not so much a matter of business with me as it is art, and not so much art as it is philanthropy. Being a connoisseur and disseminator of pigs, I wouldn't feel like I'd done my duty to the world unless I added that Berkshire to my collection. Not intrinsically, but according to the ethics of pigs as friends and coadjutors of mankind, I offer you \$500 for the animal.'

"'Jeff,' says this pork esthete, 'it ain't money; it's sentiment with me.'

"'Seven hundred,' says I.

"'Make it eight hundred,' says Rufe, 'and I'll crush the sentiment out of my heart.'

"I went under my clothes for my money belt and counted him out forty twenty-dollar gold certificates.

"'I'll just take him into my own room,' says I, 'and lock him up till after breakfast.'

"I took the pig by the hind leg. He turned on a squeal like the steam calliope at the circus.

"'Let me tote him in for you,' says Rufe, and he picks up the beast under one arm, holding his snout with the other hand, and packs him into my room like a sleeping baby.

"After breakfast Rufe, who had a chronic case of haberdashery ever since I got his trousseau, says he believes he will amble down to Misfitz-

ky's and look over some royal purple socks. And then I got as busy as a one armed man with the nettle rash pasting on wallpaper. I found an old negro man with an express wagon to hire, and we tied the pig in a sack and drove down to the circus grounds.

"I found George B. Tapley in a little tent with a window flap open. He was a fattish man, with an immediate eye, in a black skullcap, with a four ounce diamond screwed into the bosom of his red sweater.

"'Are you George B. Tapley?' I asks. 'I swear it,' says he.

"'Well, I've got it,' says I.

"'Designate,' says he. 'Are you the guinea pigs for the Asiatic python or the alfalfa for the sacred buffalo?'

"'Neither,' says I. 'I've got Beppo, the educated hog, in a sack in that wagon. I found him rooting up the flowers in my front yard this morning. I'll take the \$5,000 in large bills if it's handy.'

"George B. hustles out of his tent and asks me to follow. We got into one of the side shows. In there was a jet black pig, with a pink ribbon around his neck, lying on some hay and eating carrots that a man was feeding to him.

"'Hey, Mac,' calls G. B. 'Nothing wrong with the worldwide this morning, is there?'

"'Him? No,' says the man. 'He's got an appetite like a chorus girl at 1 a. m.'

"'How'd did you get this pipe?' says Tapley to me. 'Eating too many pork chops last night?'

"I pulls out the paper and shows him the ad.

"'Fake,' says he. 'Don't know anything about it. You've beheld with your own eyes the marvelous, worldwide porcine wonder of our four footed kingdom eating with preternatural sagacity his matutinal meal, unstrayed and unstole. Good morning.'

"I was beginning to see. I got in the wagon and told Uncle Ned to drive to the most adjacent orifice of the nearest alley. There I took out my pig, got the range carefully for the other opening, set his sights and gave him such a kick that he went out the other end of the alley twenty feet ahead of his squeal.

"Then I paid Uncle Ned his 50 cents and walked down to the newspaper office. I wanted to hear it in cold syllables. I got the advertising man to his window.

"'To decide a bet,' says I, 'wasn't the man who had this ad. put in last night short and fat, with long whiskers and a club foot?'

"'He was not,' says the man. 'He would measure about six feet by four and a half inches, with cornsilk hair and dressed like the pansies of the conservatory.'

"At dinner time I went back to Mrs. Peevy's.

"'Shall I keep some soup hot for Mr. Tatum till he comes back?' she asks.

"'If you do, ma'am,' says I, 'you'll more than exhaust for firewood all the coal in the bosom of the earth and all the forests on the outside of it.'

"So there, you see," said Jefferson Peters in conclusion, "how hard it is ever to find a fair minded and honest business partner."

"But," I began, with the freedom of long acquaintance, "the rule should work both ways. If you had offered to divide the reward you would not have lost"—

Jeff's look of dignified reproach stopped me.

"That don't involve the same principles at all," said he. "Mine was a legitimate and moral attempt at speculation. Buy low and sell high. Don't Wall street indorse it? Bulls and bears and pigs—what's the difference? Why not bristles as well as horns and fur?"