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Piggy Wins a Football Championship

BY MABEL ALBERTA SPICER.

A WEEK before he had been a happy little pig playing about the farm with other happy little pigs, cows, horses, barnyard fowls, a shepherd dog and a plain yellow cat. He had wallowed in the mud and reveled in savory slops reeking with a dozen different odors.

Today he was a very much bored little pig, imprisoned within a city backyard, in company with a family of Guinea pigs, an Indian monkey, a Shetland pony, a Malayan cockatoo, a Pekingese spaniel and a Persian cat. He slept on a cushion and grunted over an insipid diet of milk and rice. And all this had come upon him because Farmer Jones had given him to Dr. Van Loon on a bill. The doctor had thought it would be a fine joke to present the little country pig to his daughter, who was so proud of her rare animals.

These fine pets treated the good-natured little "Curly Tail" as an intruder. The Guinea pigs disclaimed all kinship with him. The monkey swung gleefully by his fine long tail from his tree and pulled the foolish little tail of the pig whenever he came within reach. The pony spurned him utterly. The cockatoo hung, head down, from her perch and pecked at him, then shrieked with delight. The Pekingese snapped at his heels. The Persian puss, when out of temper with the others, who knew how to defend themselves, took it out on Curly Tail with a saucy slap.

All this would not have been so bad had not Miss Betty scrubbed him each morning with soap, then sprinkled him with scent and tied a pink ribbon about his neck. That was more than any self-respecting pig could stand for!

This morning he stood on the newly-cut grass and gazed longingly through a crack in the fence at the mud in the alley. What would he not give for a good wallow! He was a very handsome little fellow, all pink and white with one black ear. But his desire at this minute was to make himself as black all over as that one ear. How surprised Miss Betty would have been to learn that, for she had distinctly read in her Nature Study that pigs are cleanly by instinct, that it is a desire to wash that makes them plunge into mud puddles and wallow up to their ears.

As he peered through the crack, it suddenly widened and the grocer's boy came into the yard. Curly Tail darted past him and out into the alley. He bolted between the feet of the grocer's horse, which fled in fright in one direction while the little pig dashed off in the other. Across hard streets, along muddy alleys, through vacant lots with tempting puddles he fled, till confronted by a high blind fence. Close by was a friendly opening, just large enough to allow him to pass, but much too small to admit his imaginary pursuer.

Once within the sheltering inclosure, he dropped from exhaustion. And joy! he dropped into mud! Not the odoriferous, highly-scented mud of a sty, but mud, nevertheless, soft and oozy, that flowed up over his sides, making a delicious, cool bed.

He must have been asleep a long time when he was rudely awakened by shouts and the tooting of horns. A line of boys perched along the top of the fence. Within the inclosure thousands of men and women were shouting, blowing horns and waving banners. Most of them were sitting or standing in tiers of seats on either side of a cleared space, where grotesquely-attired youths were rushing about madly with a big oval ball. Half of these contestants wore blue, the other half red. Their clothes were very clumsy appearing, and their noses and legs did not look as if they belonged to human beings.

Their strange antics Curly understood to be devices for getting possession of the most desirable mud. It had rained the night before and the ground was soft and sticky. But what curious methods they used! Upon the blowing of a whistle the players would pass the ball from one to another, run a few steps, then fall and have a fine wallow, rise again and repeat the performance to the wild cheering of the surrounding thousands. Perhaps they were trying the ground to see where the mud was deepest.

This game was to decide the championship. There was only three minutes more and the score was a tie, but, of course, Curly Tail understood nothing of this. He did not even know the ball on which the attention of so many was centered was a pig's skin. If he had, he might have bid.

All he knew was that small boys had frightened him out of a comfortable bed and that the mud looked fine at the end of the field where the struggle was raging. But never would he dare venture near that wriggling mass of arms and legs! Then one of the players threw the ball to the other end of the field and the others dashed off after it. The men and women jumped up, shouting and tooting louder than ever.

Now the cherished spot was deserted. Curly Tail could resist no longer. But, alas for his foolish habit of running without looking about him! He did not notice that a youth in blue caught the ball when it was thrown and was speeding down

the field toward him, guarded by those in blue while dodging those in red. On came the one with the ball faster and faster, and on came Curly, nearer and nearer the cherished spot, neither seeing the other.

Collision!

Over and over they rolled and a dozen others came tumbling on top. The ball escaped from the youth's grasp and rolled beyond his reach. From the desperate expression on the face beside him in the mud, the little pig should have realized that he had done something terrible in making the youth lose the ball, but he shut his eyes indifferently and settled down for a snooze.

A player in red snatched the ball and away they all tore back to the farther end of the field.

The cheering became deafening! Cries of "Touchdown! Touchdown!" rose above the whistles and horns. Everybody swept down from the grandstands, overflowed the field and went mad together. A nice place, that, for a quiet nap.

Two men with red banners and ribbons suddenly pounced down on Curly Tail and dragged him from his dear mud. He wiggled out of their hands and dodged about among the feet of the crowd, leaving his mark on many a neat skirt and pair of trousers. But one little pig was no match against those thousands! He was soon captured and then he had such an experience as no pig ever had before nor since!

He was swathed in red ribbons and paraded about the field and through the streets on the shoulder of a giant, while the men in red shouted:

"What's the matter with our mascot?"

"He's all right!"

"Who's all right?"

"Our mascot!"

The men in blue shook their fists at him and yelled:

"Make him into sausage! Make him into sausage! Make him into sausage!"

Cameras snapped him, ladies patted him, men hugged him till his ribs nearly cracked. Later at a banquet he had a most trying time—he was toasted and cheered and offered a quantity of things to eat which he did not like in the least.

Finally he was handed over to the janitor and allowed to spend the rest of the night peacefully in the cellar.

The next morning the farmer who brought butter and eggs took the little pig to his beloved country. Here he lived happily, as before, with quiet, sane people and unpretentious animals who allowed him to be just plain pig.

If Nobody Shirked.

I know not whence I came,
I know not whither I go;
But the fact stands clear that I am here,
In this world of pleasure and woe.
And out of the mist and murk
Another truth shines plain—
It is my power each day and hour
To add to its joy or its pain.

I know that the earth exists,
It is none of my business why;
I cannot find out what it's all about,
I would but waste time to try.
My life is a brief, brief thing,
I am here for a little space,
And while I stay I would like if I may,
To brighten and better the place.

The trouble, I think, with us all,
Is the lack of a high conceit.
If each man thought he was sent to this spot

To make it a bit more sweet,
How soon we could gladden the world,
How easily right all wrong,
If nobody shirked, and each one worked
To help his fellows along!

Cease wondering why you came—
Stop looking for faults and flaws;
Rise up today in your pride and say,
"I'm part of the First Great Cause!"
However full the world,
There is room for an earnest man,
It had need of me, or I would not be—
I am here to strengthen the plan."
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Governor Withycombe Led.

Out of 72 breeders of registered Cotswold sheep in Oregon, 63 breeders handling about 89 per cent of the registered Cotswolds of the state obtained their foundation stock directly or indirectly from the original registered foundation stock of Governor James Withycombe.

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