Bristol's Dyspeptic Pig

Story of an Up to Date Farmer

By CLARISSA MACKIE

The sun shone down on Frank Bristol's model farm, but there was no sunshine in the heart of its owner, nor did there appear to be gladness in the soul of the owner's pig. That stout, black bristled beast lay inertly on a bed of clean straw against the clean wall of its scientifically built cement pen.

The model farmer sat on the top of the cement wall watching his black pig with anxious eyes. The pig had been lying there since morning, scarcely noticing the trough full of sweet milk and potato parings that Bristol's housekeeper had reluctantly placed there.

"Sweet milk's too good for pigs, Mr. Bristol," Ann Dangler had said as sharply as she dared.

"Sweet food makes sweet pork," replied the model farmer coolly, and Ann had tossed her head and returned to her kitchen to bang the pots and kettles about.

"It looks as if it was going to make dead pork this time," she grumbled.

Quite regardless of Ann Dangler's opinions, Frank Bristol continued to sit on the wall of his pigpen and contemplate the prostrate form of its solitary occupant. He was a handsome pig, sleek and clean, as befitted a pig living in a scientifically built and cleanly pen. But he was ailing. For two days he had moped around the pen and refused to eat of the delicious food set forth by the highly scandalized housekeeper

"It's indigestion," concluded the model farmer, again consulting the farm manual issued by his alma mater—the agricultural college he attended. "This book says to 'compel the animal to take exercise—prod it with a stick until it runs violently around its inclosure. This mode of treatment, combined with a feeding of thin gruel, formed of two parts of white cornmeal to one part of skimmilk, will soon restore the pig to normal health.' Hum! I guess I'll go and tell Ann to make the gruel."

"Make gruel for a sick pig—never!" cried Ann Dangler when Mr. Bristol mildly made this suggestion, waving the farm manual as authority.

"Why not, Ann?"

"Because it's all nonsense. Leave him alone, Mr. Bristol, and he'll be all right He's too clean to be real healthy Why, pigs has been raised for years and years in all kinds of pens, and I never heard of one being sick before. This one's took cold from your turning the hose on him the other day."

"If you'll have the gruel ready at 4 o'clock I'll come in for it," was Mr Bristol's reply to this pointed harangue.

When she was alone Ann Dangler meekly stirred the fire and set on a kettle of skimmed milk. That was always the way these arguments with Frank Bristol ended. It was apparent that there was room for only one "boss" on the model farm.

Meanwhile Bristol had provided himself with the necessary prod in the shape of a boathook and had made his way to the pigpen.

The animal was breathing heavily, now and then grunting a bass note.

Frank Bristol opened the patent gate and stepped inside, closing the gate behind him. He went up behind the unsuspecting porker and prodded him gently with the sharp end of the boathook.

With an astonished squeal the pig bounded from his bed and ran to the farther corner of the pen.

"What are you doing in there?" demanded a nasal voice.

Bristol turned around. "Ah, Mr Daley, how are you today?"

"Pretty fair. Don't seem to be nothing the matter with your pig."

"I'm forcing him to take a little exercise," said Bristol, once more jabbing the pig with the boat hook and sidestepping as the animal raced around the pen. "He's got a bad case of indigestion, and I'm trying to cure it."

Ben Daley opened a capacious mouth and roared. "Who ever heard of a pig having indigestion?" he questioned between roars. "If he's reely sick, Mr. Bristol, you better make him up a mess of hog fennel and make him drink it. That'll do him more good than running around like that. Hawgs warn't created to take vi'lent exercise. 'Tain't their natur' so to do."

"This—one—seems—to—take—to—it—pretty—naturally!" puffed Bristol, as he dodged to and fro, getting in jabs at the infuriated pig.

"You mark my words, young man, you'll have that there pig chasing you before long!" was Ben Daley's ominous parting when he went.

Frank Bristol had realized this already. Whatever had been the matter with his pet pig, the animal had appeared to have recovered from the malady with unexpected rapidity, and, try as he might, the model farmer could not escape from the path of the charging beast long enough to unfasten the patent gate and get out of the pen.

Now and then the race around the inclosure reached a stage when Frank Bristol was in pursuit of the pig, but [illegible] when the pig fell behind a little. Once Frank turned and cried "Shoo!" at the pig, just as a woman would have done, but the pig only dropped his snout to the ground and charged at him.

"I—wish—I—hadn't—made—this—wall—quite—s-o—high," panted Frank Bristol as he dodged a sudden feint of the pig and was finally compelled to jump clear over the animal.

"I—wish — A-Ann Dangler — would—bring—out that gru-u-el!" he said later, as he stumbled over the trough and arose with one hand dripping with milk. This time the pig nearly reached him. He managed to jab again at the pig, and the pig stopped in front of the patent gate to take stock of his wounds and grunt defiance at his owner. It was at that moment Frank heard voices outside the high stone wall of the pigpen.

One voice was the shrill utterance of Ann Dangler; the other voice belonged to the girl but for whom he would never have become a farmer. He had once been engaged to Violet Sloan, but Violet's lovely auburn head had been turned by the worship of a dozen other admirers, and they had quarreled, and Frank had closed up his real estate office and taken to scientific farming. "Getting next to nature," was one way of describing the case.

"He's in the pigpen most likely," Ann Dangler was saying in a hostile voice.

"Pigpen!" shrieked Violet Sloan's accents. "What on earth is he doing in such a filthy place?"

"Filthy!" returned Ann Dangler. "I guess you never see a pigpen that wasn't filthy except this one. 'Tain't natural for a pig to live so clean, I say. Why, Mr. Bristol even turns the hose on him once a week, and that's what's the matter now. The pig has caught cold from being too clean."

"Nonsense," returned Violet. "Who ever heard of any one thriving in dirt? If Frank must raise pigs I'm glad they are nice clean pigs in a cement pigpen."

"Humph!" was Ann's reply as she followed the daintily dressed girl to the cement wall.

"Ah, here is a gate! Shall we go and look inside?" asked Violet, and without waiting for Ann's reply she moved toward the patent gate. Ann trotting close behind. The sight that met their eyes glued them to the patent gate.

Around and around the circular pen raced the weary form of the model farmer. Behind him trotted with dogged persistency the dyspeptic pig. Whenever Bristol showed a tendency to slacken his gait the pig grunted and cantered faster.

Once the pig darted into the covered sleeping pen, and Bristol shot to the door and endeavored to roll the sliding portal to its place, but in vain. It stuck, and ere Bristol could move it the pig dashed out again, shooting the model farmer to an ignominious position on the straw of the pen.

Thoroughly angry, Bristol swung the boat hook at the beast only to have the slippery handle slide through his hands to the far side of the pen.

Now he was without a weapon. Then the pig charged him again, grunting angrily

He did not dare look at the gate, though he was conscious of feminine forms standing there. He was too excited to wonder what Violet Sloan was doing there. He was mentally composing a letter to be written to the author of the article in the farm manual on "Dyspepsia In Pigs." In this imaginary letter there were many underscored words and countless exclamation points and innumerable interrogation points.

He was still doing this humiliating marathon around the scientifically built pigpen when he heard an indignant cry from Ann Dangler. From the corner of his eye, as he ran ahead of the pig, he saw Violet Sloan snatch Ann Dangler's pink sunbonnet from her tow colored head, saw Violet's lithe form slip inside the patent gate, saw her intercept the pig with one flash of the pink bonnet and witnessed an instant later that animal rushing to the far side of the inclosure with frightened squeals, while the pink sunbonnet was tied over his snout and eyes.

"Hurry through—dear!" cried Violet Sloan, holding the gate open for her one time lover to escape.

As the gate slammed behind them Ann Dangler flounced toward the house, her sunbonnetless head held high in the air—a very model of scandalized virtue.

"Dear!" she sniffed contemptuously as she rocked to and fro in the calico covered kitchen rocker. "Call him 'dear'—a man I wouldn't look at twice! I wonder who she is?"

At that instant Mr. Bristol appeared at the door, leading Violet Sloan by the hand. They both looked very happy. "I suppose you wonder who this lady is, Ann Dangler," remarked Bristol pleasantly. "This is now Miss Sloan. Later on she will be Mrs. Bristol and the boss of the model farm!"

"But no more dyspeptic pigs," said Violet decisively. "Poor Frank has run off all the flesh he gained by being in the country here, and the pig is dead—dead as a doornail!"

And the local veterinarian declared that the pig died of acute dyspepsia, induced by too violent exercise after eating.

Ann Dangler insisted that it was because the pig was too scientifically clean.

Ben Daley said it must have been the way the wind was.

Violet Sloan and Frank Bristol—and they were the only two whose opinion on the subject mattered, as the pig was dead—did not say a word. They had not heard anything except their own voices discussing the wedding details.

LIFE ON A BOER FARM.

The House a Chamber of Horrors, the Housewife Hopelessly Dull.

An American woman traveling in South Africa was detained by floods and compelled to spend a month on a Boer farm. "The first night's monotony," she writes, "was broken by the roaring of the ostriches under our window. We thought it was a tame lion.

"The farmer and his family lived chiefly on sour bread and sour skim-milk, and I was therefore hungry most of the time, and the ripe figs hanging in clusters were pretty alluring. After pushing back the skin of the fig and enjoying the soft fruit with its tropical taste, I had a refreshing night's sleep, only to awaken in the morning pretty well scared, for my tongue was so swollen and black that I could not talk.

"The Boer wife laughed and enjoyed my discomfort and explained that the skin of the fig had numerous fine thorns and I had not been careful to remove them when eating.

"When I told the farmer's wife that I liked buttermilk in quantity I noticed that I had a cupful or so given me, but she threw it by the pailful to the pigs. They were of far more consequence to her than I, for they would stay longer with her and were her familiars. I was not.

"Then, again, when I was hungry for butter on my bread a white, clammy substance made from sheep's tail fat was handed to me, and I could not allow the farmer's wife to see me quiver. She sold her butter in the village close by at 75 cents a pound, more or less. Sour bread and green strawberries (plenty of them) were considered good enough.

"This Boer family was one of the wealthiest of their kind. There was not a ripple of fun or exuberant life in anything but the live stock. Conversation was a dead language—unknown.

"The women are mute beings, accepting their destiny with deep stillness. The wife gives up her strength to the limit and dies after giving birth to a dozen or more children, to make way for wife No. 2, who gives another dozen children to her country. Her adobe house, with its dirt floor made of ant hill clay mixed with beef gall, is a chamber of horrors to an American traveler.

"The farmer depends upon his ten or eighteen children of all sizes to help him. A Kaffir as an employee is undependable as the winds that blow. Yet that Kaffir is the hired man in the mines and elsewhere in South Africa. The white man as a day laborer is a general failure. He cannot be worked in droves like the Kaffir from the interior, whose language, in clicks and vowel sounds, is hardly human.

"The Boer is not long lived. One seldom met an aged Boer of the old stock. Oom Paul Kruger, who was seventy-five years old when he died, was an exception. Hatred toward the uitlander and the lust for gold and power were what kept the fires of life burning at white heat within him."—Health Culture.

Oratory No Longer Soars.

"Oratory is a lost art," said a Cleveland man the other day. "I used to go down to the courts just to hear the lurid speeches. Nothing doing in that line any more. The lawyers do not talk about flowers, rainbows and sunbeams today.

"There was a lawyer in Cleveland years ago—Bill Robinson was his name—whose addresses to a jury always attracted a crowd. I will forever remember one of his sentences. The man he was fighting in the suit had a reputation as something of a miser.

"'Who is this man—who is he?' thundered Robinson. 'You know and I know that he boils his potatoes in widows' tears.'

"This phrase caught the jury, and Robinson won his case, but one does not hear any such 'oratory' as that nowadays."—Case and Comment.

The Real Trouble.

"Oh, doctor," sighed the patient, "I am so glad you have come. I feel dreadful, and I don't know what in the world is the matter with me. My husband says it is nothing but nervous indigestion, but his mother is positive I am going to have appendicitis, and my mother declares I have intermittent fever, and my sister says it looks to her like creeping paralysis, and Aunt Henrietta says I've got malaria. What do you think I've got, doctor?"

"Well," frowns the physician, "from these symptoms I should say offhand that you have too many relatives."—Chicago Post.

Dancing and Kissing.

The old time ballroom smacked of the kiss. Without it the dance was incomplete. It was claimed as a right. And given freely. The very idea of such an omission would have caused a strike, as these lines foretold:

But some reply, What foole would daunce
If that when daunce is doone
He may not have at ladye's lips
That which in daunce he woon?

—London Tatler.

Jolting His Lawyer.

Church—What was the name you called your lawyer?

Gotham—Necessity.

"But that's a funny name. Why do you call him Necessity?"

"Because he knows no law."—Yonkers Statesman.

A Matter of Fractions.

Biggs—My half brother is engaged to my wife's half sister. Diggs—When will they be made one?—Boston Transcript.

[illegible]

FOREST FIRES.

They Are Sometimes a Gain to Those Who Own the Timber.

People who have read accounts of great forest fires may be surprised to learn that, in place of loss, such fires are sometimes a gain to the owner. The loss in lumber if cut within a few years is small, and the removal of underbrush reduces the cost of lumbering.

That a forest fire could in any way be a benefit and not an injury sounds so novel that some proof is necessary. The statement has been made that more timber is destroyed by fire every year than is converted into lumber. As a matter of fact, the report of the forest service declares the actual fire loss in national reserves for the last three years has amounted to only one-tenth of 1 per cent. From some fifty lumber companies the highest admitted loss from fire is 2 per cent in twenty years. Another company estimated its fire loss for fifty-two years at 1 per cent, and another, during sixty, has had an annual loss of one-sixteenth of 1 per cent. Twenty-eight companies report their loss since organization as "hardly worth mentioning."

The point of these reports, so surprising to those unacquainted with the lumber business, is that the fires, while they kill the trees, do not consume the trunk. The less severe fires do not necessarily kill the trees. Worse fires do this by burning the underbrush around the trees and perhaps the tops of the trees. But the trunk of the tree, the log from which the boards are to be cut, is seldom touched. The killed timber makes as good lumber as the other, the only difference being that it is necessary to cut it within a limited time.

White pine or hemlock in the upper Mississippi valley must be cut the first or the second winter following the fire or worms will injure the lumber. The two year period applies in the "inland empire" and to the hemlock on the slopes of the Cascades. Western spruce need not be cut for three years and western fir for four years. Red cedar has no limit, and trees burned fifty years ago are now being turned into shingles.—Jonas Howard in Chicago Tribune.

EQUAL TO THE TEST.

Daniel Webster, the Boy, at His Entrance to Exeter Academy.

Almost a year passed, however, before the plan so long cherished was fairly started and Daniel, dressed in a brand new homemade suit and astride a sidesaddle, rode with his father to Exeter to be entered at the famous academy founded by John Phillips. The principal then and forty years thereafter was Dr. Benjamin Abbot, one of the greatest teachers our country has yet produced. As the doctor was ill the duty of examining the new pupil fell to Joseph S. Buckminster, then an usher at the academy, but destined to influence strongly the religious life of New England.

It was the custom of the doctor, we are told, to conduct the examination of applicants with pompous ceremony, and that, imitating him, young Buckminster summoned Webster to his presence, put on his hat and said, "Well, sir, what is your age?" "Fourteen," was the reply. "Take this Bible, my lad, and read that chapter."

The passage given him was St. Luke's dramatic description of the conspiring of Judas with the priests and scribes, of the last supper, of the betrayal by Judas, of the three denials of Peter and the scene in the house of the high priest. But young Webster was equal to the test and read the whole passage to the end in a voice and with a fervor such as Master Buckminster had never listened to before. "Young man," said he, "you are qualified to enter this institution," and no more questions were put to him.—John Bach McMaster, "Daniel Webster."

A Word to Study.

Snelpaardeloosezoondeerspoorwegpitroolrijtuig—that's the technical and locally accepted name of the automobile in Flanders. "Snell" (note that the second letter is n, not m) means "rapid;" "paardeloos" means "horseless;" "zoondeerspoorweg" is the recognized way of describing a thing "without rails," and, finally, "pitroolrijtung" implies a thing "driven by petroleum." So you have it, quite simply, and mere white whizzers and drab devils are outclassed. But how'd you like to be hit by a real "snellpaardeloosz"—etc.?—St. Louis Republic.

Evolutions of Custom.

"My son," said Mrs. McGudley, "before I married your father I made him promise that he would not smoke or play cards for money."

"Yes?"

"Times have changed. If you decide to propose to a woman I want you to exact a similar assurance."—Washington Star.

Made the Sale.

"Mr. Whilker, I have seen it stated that women's feet are becoming larger. How about that?"

"There may be some truth in it, but among all my customers I don't know a single one that it applies to, madam."—Chicago Tribune.

Knows No Pity.

"Is he very bitter against the man who ran away with his wife?"

"Almost too bitter. He insists upon getting a divorce so that she can marry him."—Houston Post.

[illegible]

"He has a good wife, hasn't he?"

"I should say so. He can always borrow money from her when he's broke himself."—Detroit Free Press.

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