

TIT FOR TAT



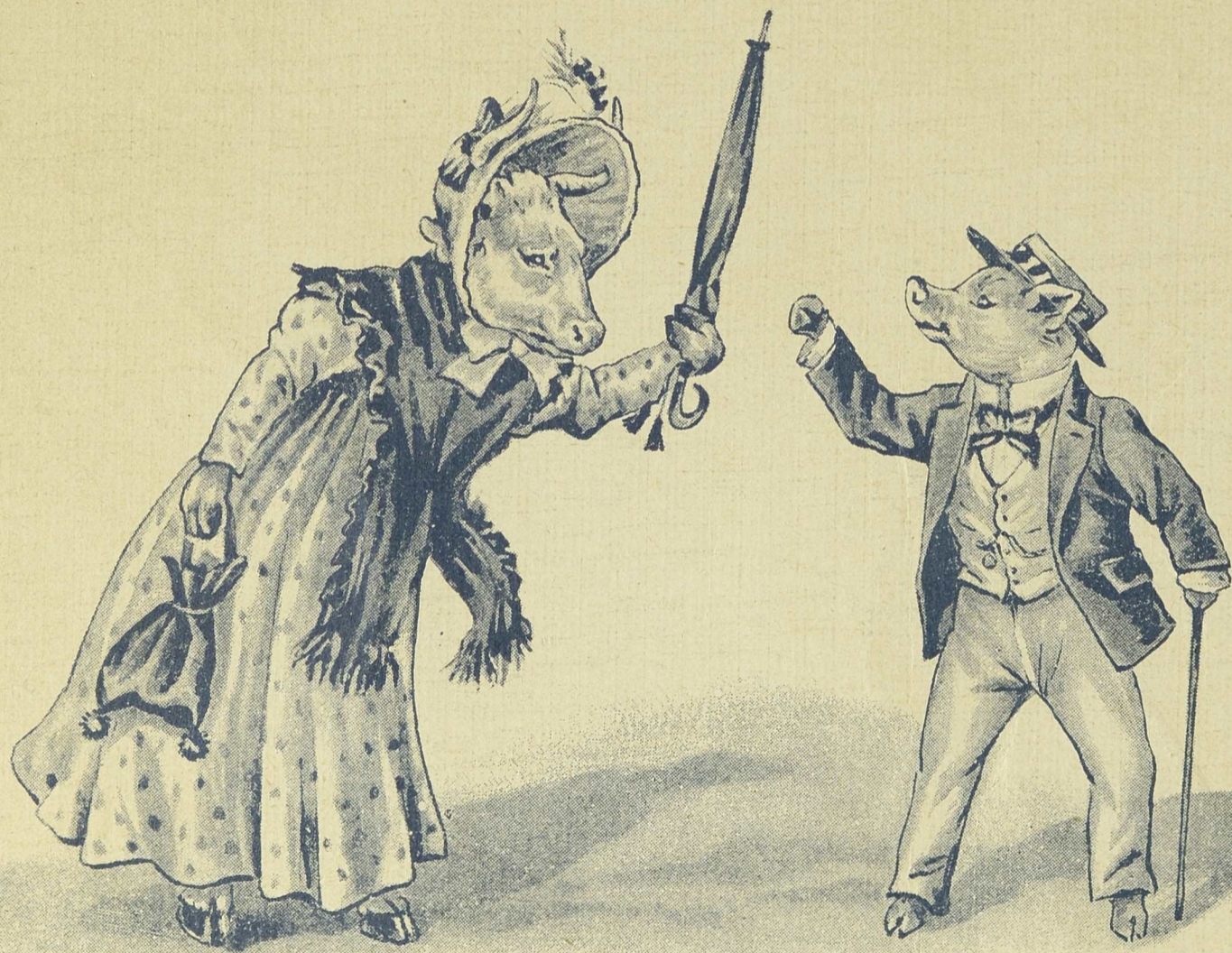
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 E. C.

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TIT FOR TAT.

I'm a pig of high degree!
Oh, you must have heard of me,
And to know me I am sure you cannot fail.
For I'm known in every town
As a pig of great renown,
Has not ev'rybody heard of Curly Tail?



Long ago I had a row
With a stupid
brown eyed cow;

Mrs. Alderney it was,
you've heard of her;
Well, we quarrelled
o'er a trifle,

And we took no pains to stifle,

All our feelings, so we fought and didn't care.

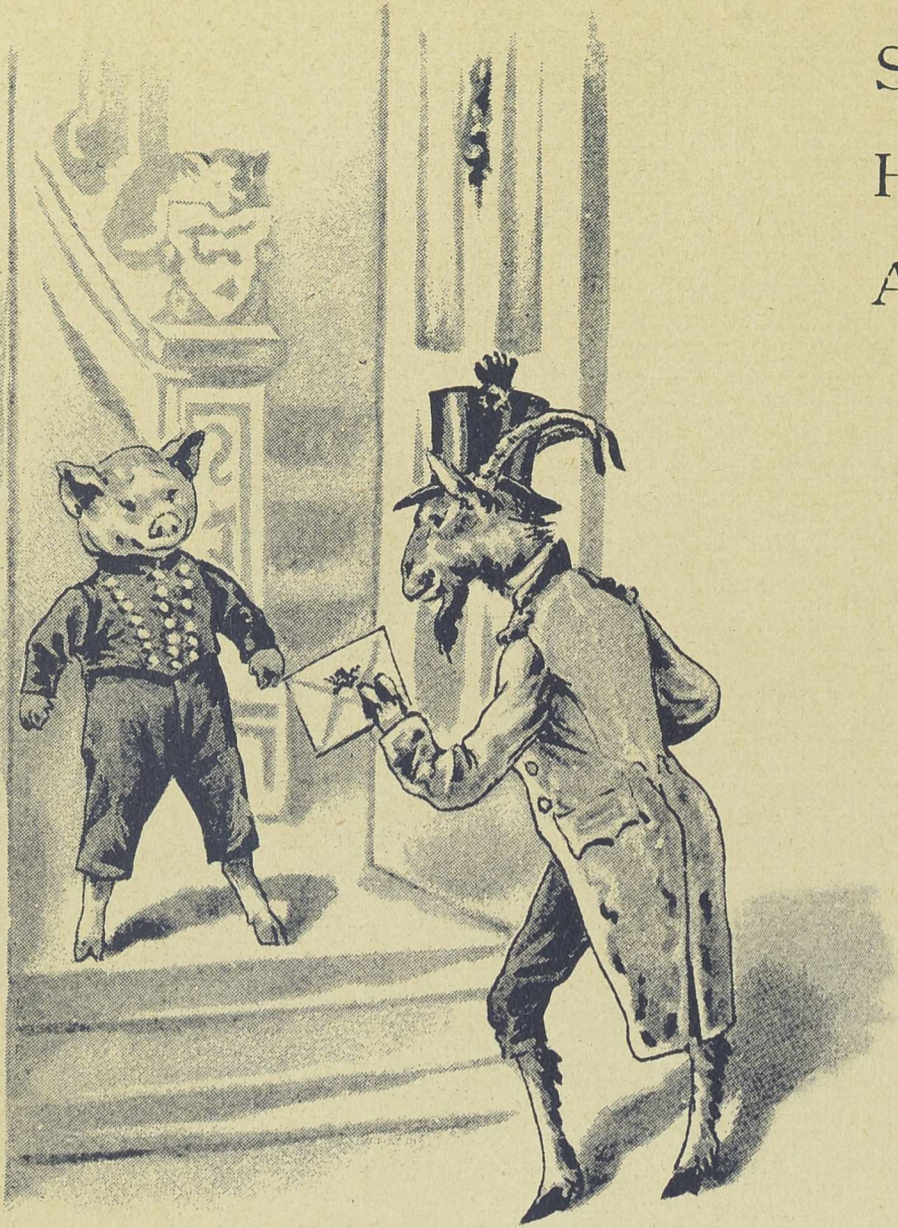
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After that of course we parted,
Neither of us broken hearted,
And whene'er we met, cut each other dead,
And my tail, it curled still tighter,
When she passed as if to spite her,
And you should have seen me toss my graceful head.

By the way, that row arose
From remarks about my nose,
That most classical and intellectual feature,

Mrs. Alderney was heard
To speak lightly of it, stirred
No doubt by jealous feeling, foolish creature.





So I just remarked politely,
How obnoxious and unsightly
Are the horns with which
each cow adorns its bonnet.

And of course these conversations,
Led to very strained relations,
And we came to blows
I grieve to say upon it.

You can judge of my surprise
Why, I scarce believed my eyes,
I assure you that
it gave me palpitation,
When an ancient serving goat
Brought last week
a crested note
From my enemy — in fact
an invitation.



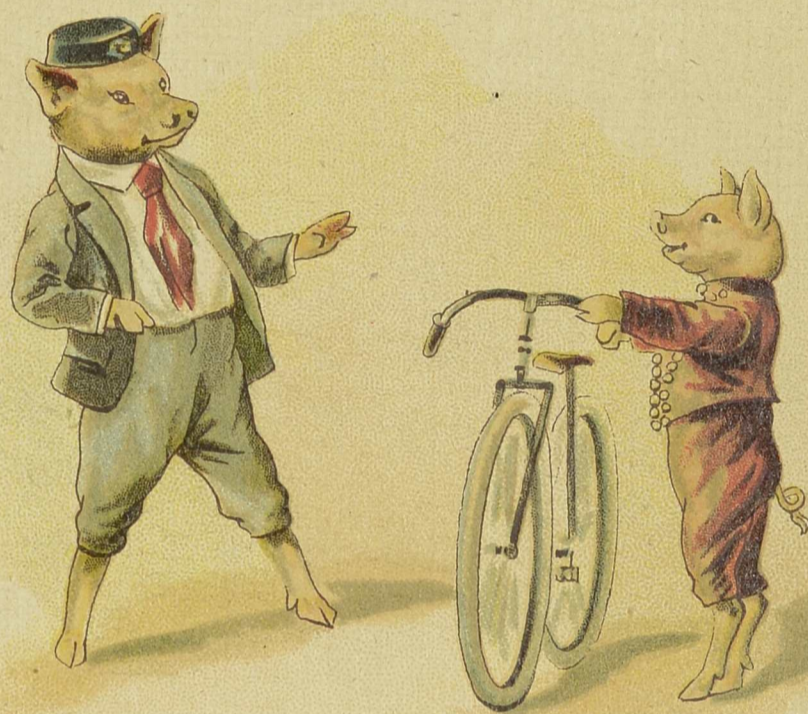


It ran, "Won't you come and dine,
"At my house at half past nine,
"Next Monday in a very friendly way?"

"Tis a little Christmas party

"We are giving and most hearty

"Shall your welcome be,
so honour us I pray".



Well, I couldn't make it out,

And I went all day about

On my bicycle to see

who else was going,

Nearly all my friends I found

When I ended up my round

Had gilt-edged cards

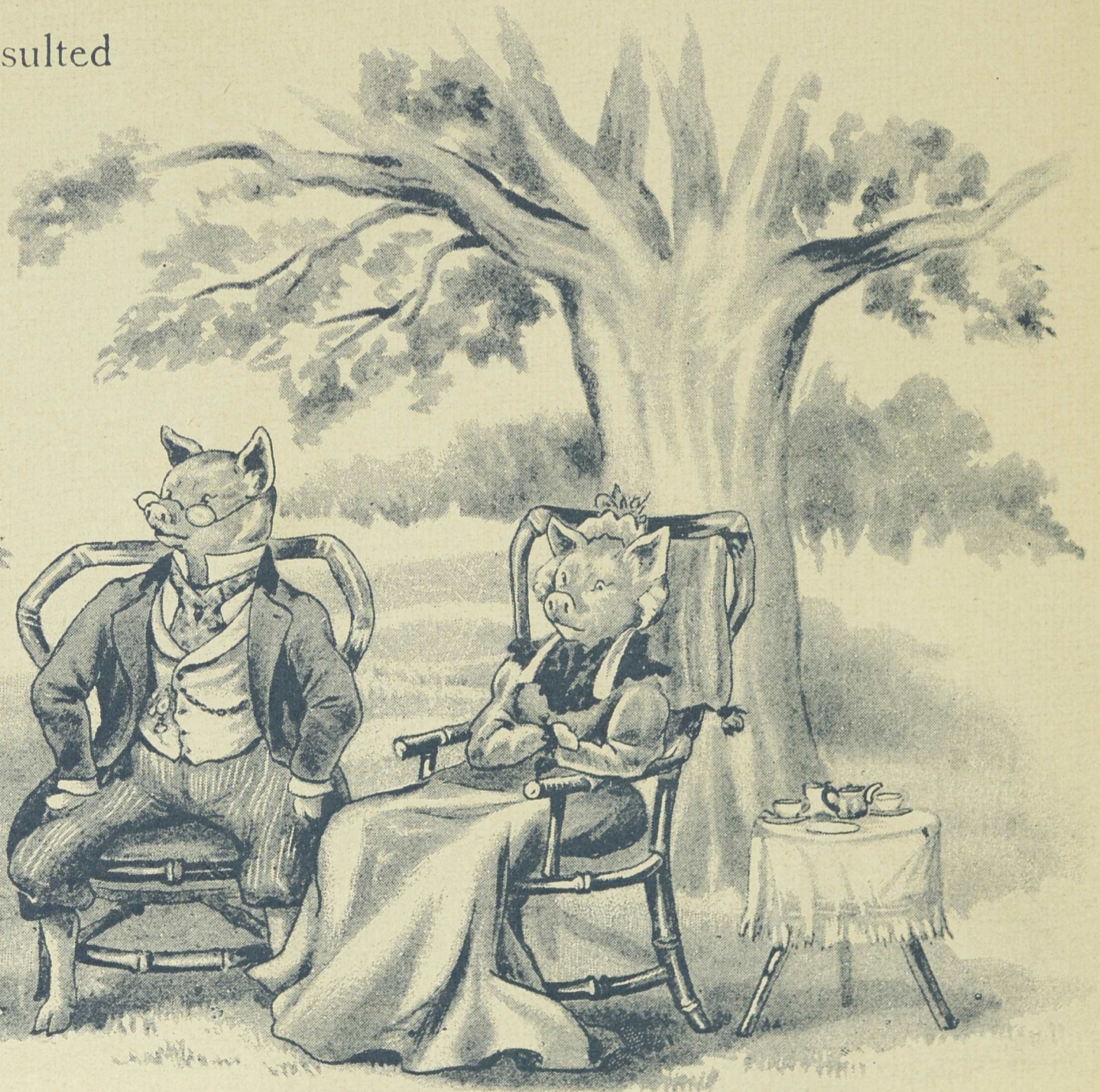
an invitation showing.



All, with notable exceptions
Which so puzzled my perceptions
That I almost answered
 “NO” in irritation,
For in all the country round
Where so largely they abound,
Not another pig received an invitation.

They of course were much insulted
By this slight when I consulted
Every one as well
 as every other friend.

They advised me not to go,
But I hate advice
 you know,
So I actually
accepted in
the end.



With a Fountain pen I wrote

A polite and scented note

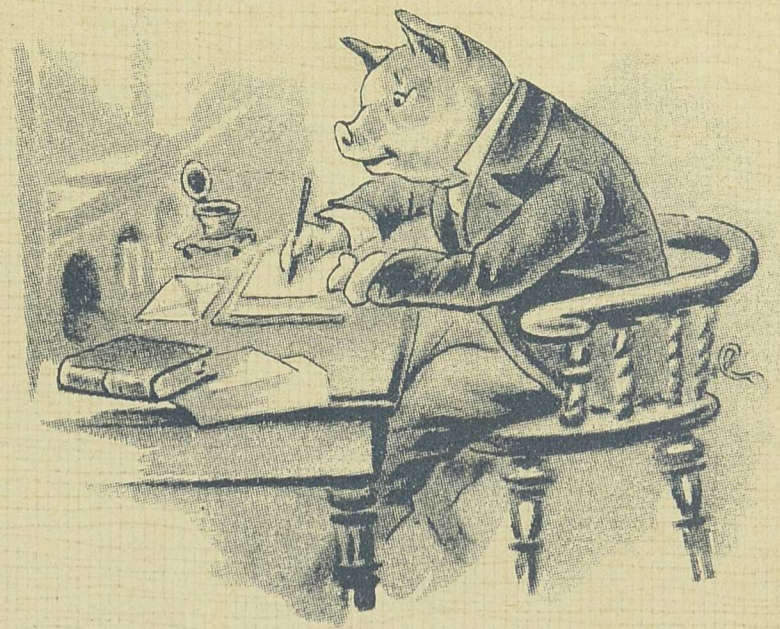
Ornamented further with

armorial bearings,

Our motto's good I think,

“Drink pretty creature, drink”,

And our crest's a chaste design in “Tater Parings”



It has always been my passion

To be dressed within the fashion

So I called at once

on Guinea Pig and Co.

Whose most elegant

devices,

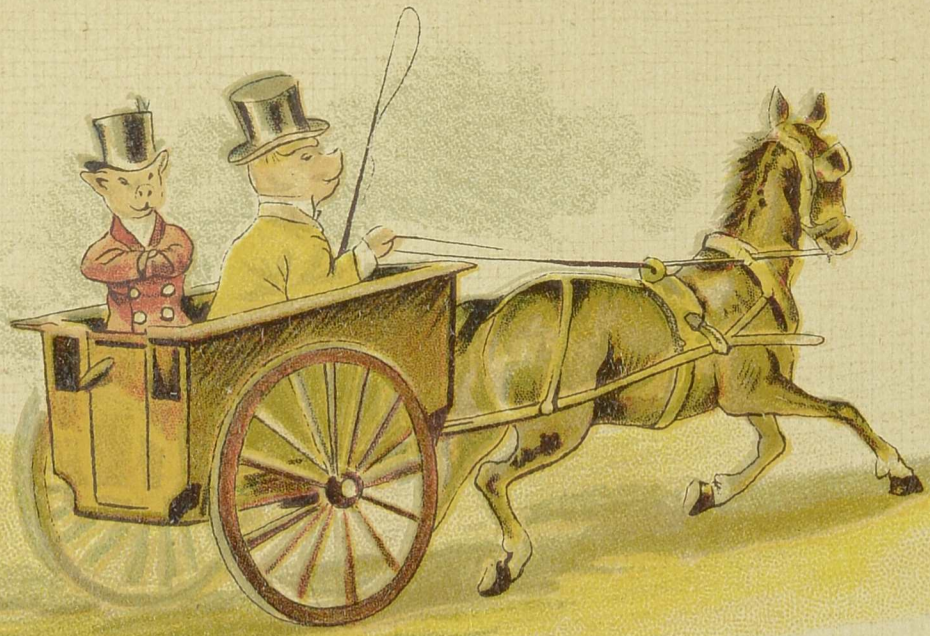
Can command

the highest prices,

For they make for all

the Royal pigs you know.





I was measured for some clothes
And the best of things I chose
Out of fashion books
and pattern papers many,
And the guinea pigs excited
Tried to wag their tails delighted,
At my taste but found, alas, they hadn't any.

At half past nine I started
Gaily dressed and so light hearted,
With a button-hole of onions and sage.
I drove there in a sociable

My tie was irreproachable
And I had not felt
so smart for
quite an age.





Every one of course was present

And the hostess

was most pleasant,

And the house was hung

with scarlet berried holly,

While beneath the mistletoe

In the doorway hanging low,

Two donkeys met and

kissed midst laughter jolly.

Then the liveried goat announced,

In a bleating most pronounced,

That dinner, welcome meal,

was on the table;

Mrs. Sheep with jewels rare,

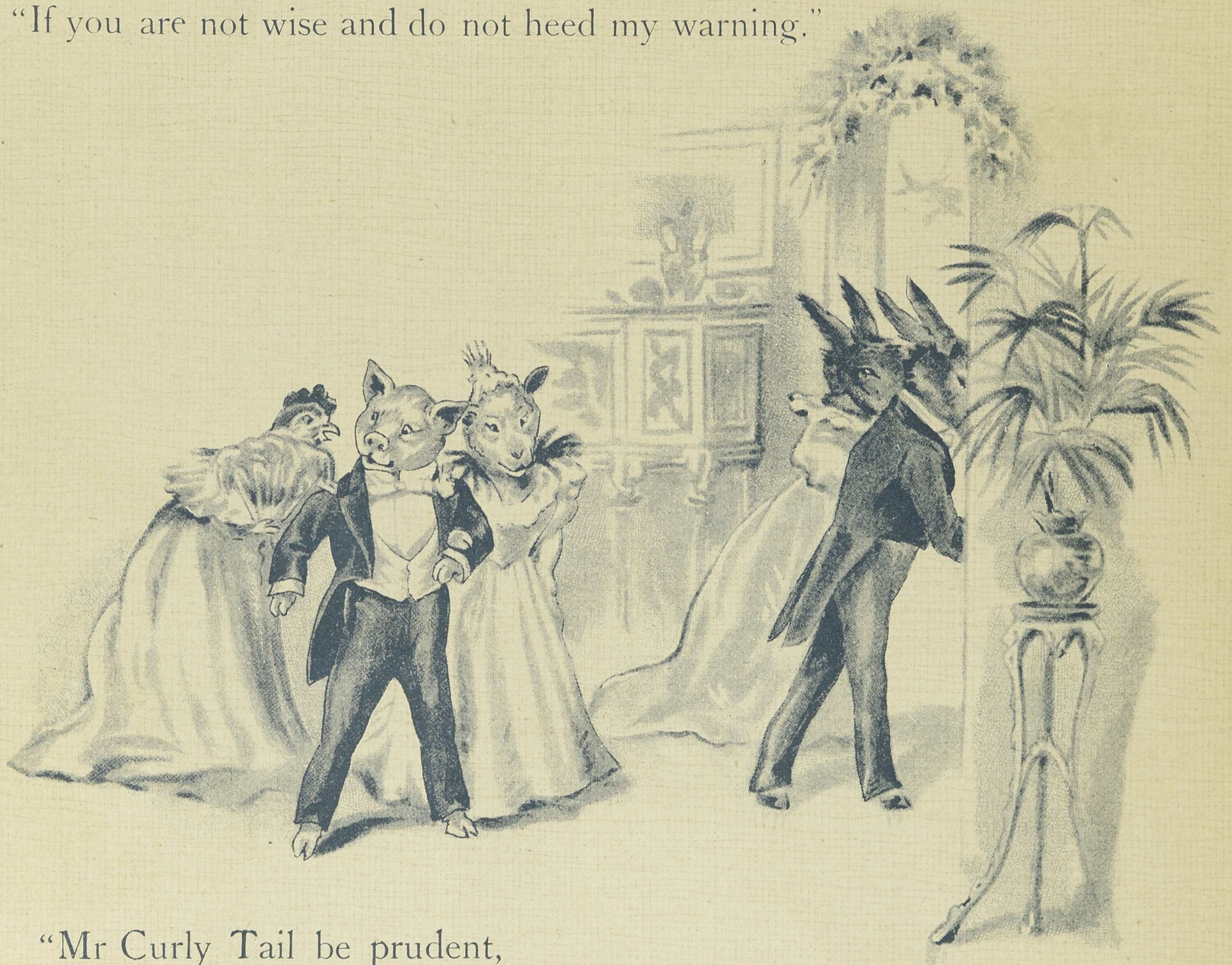
Sparkling in her woolly hair

To contain her joyous feelings

was unable.



As she took my arm she said
“Oh there’s such a lovely spread,
“And I don’t suppose we’ll finish till the morning.”
But a chicken overheard her,
And she whispered. “There’ll be murder
“If you are not wise and do not heed my warning.”



“Mr Curly Tail be prudent,
“I have heard that you’re a student
“Of the laws of thoughtfulness and common-sense,
“There’s a horrid plot laid for you,
“So go home now I implore you
“And your dignity shall be your recompense.”

“What? Go home!” I cried indignant,

“Not for all the plots malignant

“That were ever laid, or ever shall be planned.

“Thoughts of dinner do I cherish

“And I’ll have it if I perish,

“Chicken-hearted I am not you understand.”

Soon around the well filled table,

Which indeed seemed quite unable

To contain the luxuries upon it lying,

We were seated all together

Talking glibly of the weather

Though our thoughts were really

only foodwards flying.



But to come quick to the point,
There behind a steaming joint,
Mrs Alderney sat beaming, silk arrayed,
In her eyes a mocking laughter,
(Oh, we knew its reason after)
And on her lips a smile of triumph played.



“Mr. Curly Tail,” she said
As she raised her horn-trimmed head,
And all as if by magic stopped their talk,
While I kindly smiled upon her,
“Here’s a dish here in your honour,
“May I cut you just a little slice of pork”.”



For a moment all set round,

Open-mouthed and eyed, spell-bound;

'Twas as if a bomb had fallen on the table.

I felt my whiskers whiten,

And my lips with anger tighten,

But to keep composed, thank goodness I was able.

What it cost me no one knows,

But with dignity I rose

I was quivering all over like a leaf;

But I had my answer ready

And I said in accents steady,

"Oh thank you but I'd rather have some beef."

In a moment my emotion
Was as nought to the commotion

That my answer caused among the angry cows,
Every guest rose from the table

But my dignity was able
To withstand their flashing eyes and stormy brows.



Oh, the scene should have been painted,
Mrs. Alderney, she fainted

And a peacock burnt his feathers to restore her,
And the noise was so appalling

That I thought the roof was falling,
And a cat came in to steal and no one saw her.

I left the room victorious,

My retreat I know was glorious,

'T was tit-for-tat and

Curly Tail the winner,

And the thought of that consoled me,

When my thirst and hunger told me

That I'd gone away without a scrap of dinner.

But ever since that night,

When a cow comes into sight,

I turn my head and look the other way,

Such a meeting speechless finds me,

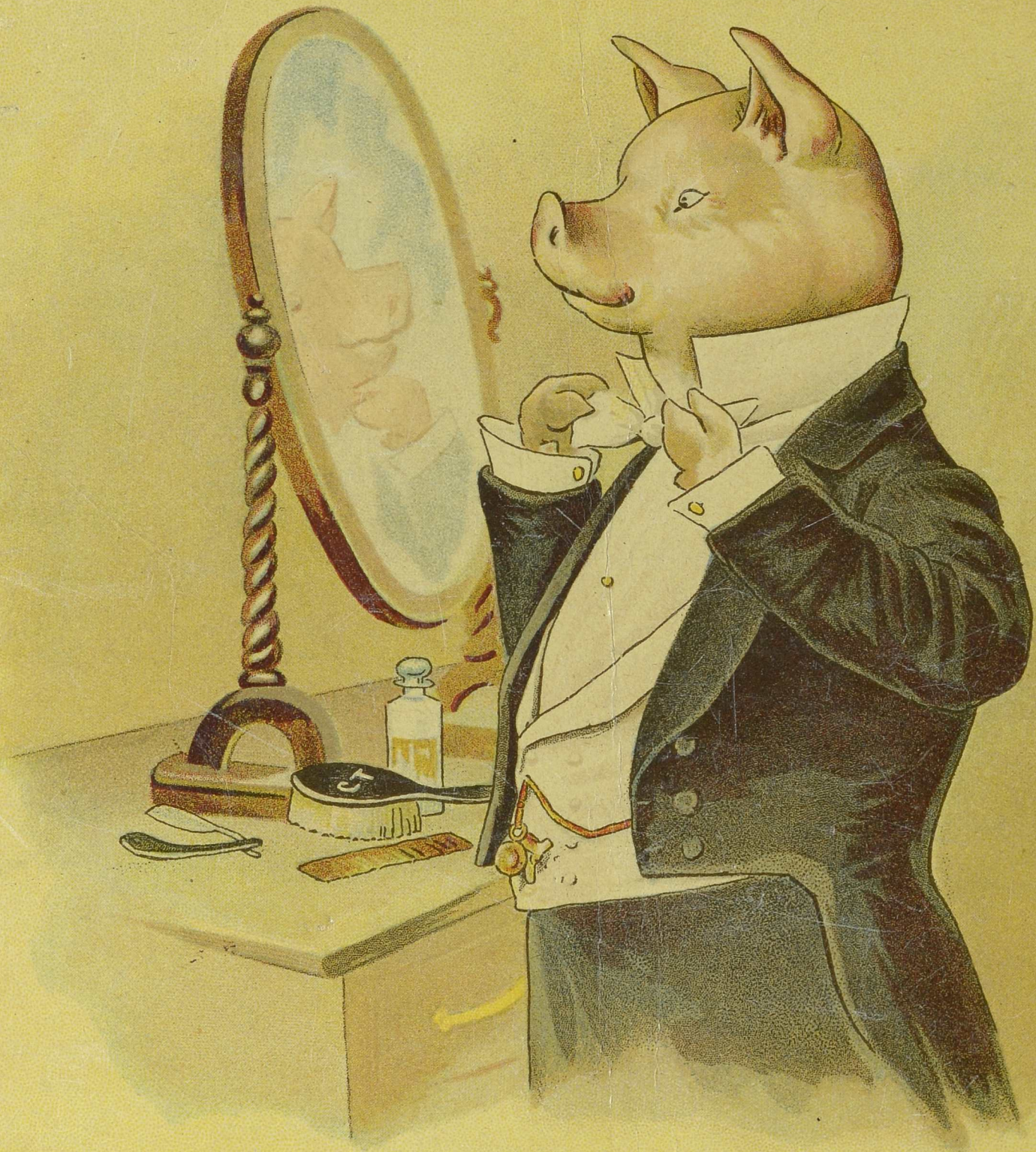
It so painfully reminds me,

Of that steaming dish served

up on Christmas day.

EDITH GRABHAM.





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