

THE ADVENTURES OF JERRY MUSKRAT

CHAPTER 15: WHAT SPOTTY THE TURTLE FOUND



BY THORNTON W. BURGESS



Spotty the Turtle stared and stared and stared, until it seemed as if his eyes surely would pop out of his funny little head. Of course he could believe his own eyes, and yet—and yet—well, if anybody else had seen what he was looking at and had told him about it, he wouldn't have believed it. No, Sir, he wouldn't have believed it. You see, he couldn't have believed it because—why, because it didn't seem as if it could be really and truly so.

He wondered if the sun shining in his eyes made him think he saw more than he really did see, so he carefully changed his position. It made no difference. Then Spotty was sure that what he saw was real, and that he had found the cause of the trouble in the Laughing Brook, which had made it stop laughing and the Smiling Pool stop smiling.

Spotty the Turtle was feeling pretty good. In fact, Spotty was feeling very good indeed, because he had been the first to find out what was the matter with the Laughing Brook. At least, he thought that he was the first, and he was of all the little people who live in the Smiling Pool. Only Ol' Mistah Buzzard had been before him, and he didn't count because his wings are broad, and all he had to do was to sail over the Green Forest and look down. The ones who really counted were Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter and Jerry Muskrat and Grandfather Frog. Billy Mink had stopped

for a nap. Little Joe Otter had stopped to play. Jerry Muskrat had stopped to eat. Grandfather Frog had stopped for a sun-nap. But Spotty the Turtle had kept right on going, and now here he was, the first one to find the cause of the trouble in the Laughing Brook. Do you wonder that he felt proud and very happy?

Keeping at it, that's the way
Spotty won the race that day.

But now Spotty was beginning to wish that some of the others would hurry up. He wanted to know what they thought. He wanted to talk it all over. It was such a surprising thing that he could make neither head nor tail of it himself, and he wondered what the others would say. And now the long black shadows were creeping through the Green Forest, and if they didn't get there pretty soon, they would have to wait until the next day.

So Spotty the Turtle found a good place to spend the night, and then he sat down to watch and wait. Right before him was the thing which he had found and which puzzled him so. What was it? Why, it was a wall. Yes, Sir, that is just what it was—a wall of logs and sticks and mud, and it was right across the Laughing Brook, where the banks were steep and narrow. Of course the Laughing Brook could laugh no longer; there couldn't enough water get through that wall of logs and sticks

and mud to make even the beginning of a laugh. Spotty wondered what lay behind that wall, and who had built it, and what for, and a lot of other things. And he was still wondering when he fell asleep.