

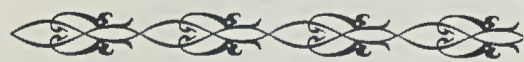
I Am Proud...

Tahj

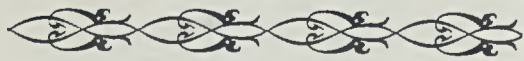
I admire the human race. Everybody is talking about the mess we have made here and there and everywhere. That's silly stuff. Over the long and dark centuries, we have not made a mess. We have done and are doing a better job than anyone has a right to expect us to do. From the beginning we found ourselves alone in a big, dark universe. We were not only alone but were the only thing on this earth that could realize its loneliness. We took a close look at the universe, and then centered our attention upon making something practical and useful out of it.

First of all, we started with a darkness and a God. This God gave us a light, a sense of direction, and a goal to work toward. We began to set up our standards for living together. We discovered that gentleness and kindness were more desired than hardness and cruelty. We are for the most part honest and trustworthy. It is news when we find that something has been stolen from us. We are decent most of the time, when we could just as easily be evil. With silence and mystery behind us and ahead of us, we are still happy. We make up gay little tunes and hum them. We look life in the eye, and smile. I like that, and admire people who do it. We have discovered beauty and love and cherish it. We have power and initiative to look at our environment and criticize it and improve it.

We found that living with millions of people it was necessary that we set up a governing system. We have conceived the ideal of justice and plan it for all men. Knowing that we have to keep alive, we use our many abilities. Out of the earth we take food and improve it. We have, through the centuries improved light, heat and transportation. We have found



CATHRYN MEASE



HILLTOP—PAGE TWELVE

ways to move easily under the water and through the air. We enjoy the product of our ability. Every morning the necessity for the day's work faces us. We go into it with courage and determination.

We are now eyeing our neighboring planets. It would not surprise any one if man one day begins to move among these planets. When something hard comes up, man works hard on the problem until he solves it. I believe he has no limit.

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Transfiguration

Winter came.

I found a dirty cocoon in an old bare tree,
Picked and brushed it for others to see.

"No good can come of that," they said,
"A dirty case—no life—it's dead."
But I knew of the mighty faith in good,
And cared for it as best I could.

Spring came.

A life was moving within that wall,
Surely my faith had not been
Within an hour my reward was small.
this:

A beautiful thing that others miss
Came from the walls like the faith I knew,
Arrayed in beauty and crowned with dew.

Life came.

Can it be thus with a life lost at night,
That love combines with faith to make a light,
Beautiful, shining, glorious to behold,
Matched with the rainbow's pot of gold.

"Instill this faith in your heart," I said.
"Trust in the least; they are not dead."

—CLARA BRINCEFIELD

"What will we name her?" I asked Sonny, a mischievous smile spreading across his freckled face. "Oh, I don't know," I replied, looking at the tiny ball of fur curled up at my feet. "It would have to be something mysterious and very unusual."

At that moment, the little cat opened her slanted green eyes and looked at us. I'm sure she understood every word we had said, she blinked and swished her long plume-like tail. She was somehow different from the other cats my brother and I had rescued from starving or being crushed under the wheels of a passing car. She was smoky black all over, except for a splotch of yellow on her forehead which gave to her a weird, enchanted appearance.

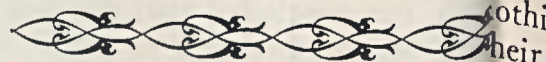
Suddenly, I thought of a word I had never heard it before since; but it was the perfect name for her, "Tahj." I said the name aloud and she turned and blinked those emerald green eyes as if she would say, "How did you guess it?"

We taught her to stand on her hind legs when we popped our fingers and said, "Stand!" She would roll over on her back at the command, "Roll!" All the kids in the neighborhood loved to come over to our house to watch her perform. She was always ready to show her tricks, but sometimes, in the middle of one of her stands, I could see a slight twinkle in her Oriental eyes. I'm sure she was laughing at us!

One day, Sonny ran into our house almost in tears. He said that a man had tried to steal Tahj. When he calmed down a bit, he told us a man in a shiny black coat had stopped and asked if he could buy Tahj. Sonny told the man it wasn't for sale, and then ran away as fast as he could.

About seven o'clock that evening

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BETTY STACY

