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NO. 49

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The RESULT of A NEW YEAR'S VISIT

By ALICE LOUISE LEE
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THE cat, indeed! Aunt Mary, you have told me a dozen times that you detest that cat!" Mrs. Spud leaned over her traveling bag and tightened a strap, saying energetically, "Niece Mary, a cat's a cat, whether I detest it or not, and I can't see it starve."
"But, Aunt Mary," protested her niece helplessly, "I've been years getting you here, and the next day you hurry home to feed an old, whiskered cat!"
Mrs. Spud's eyes smiled, but her lips were firmly set. She tied her bonnet ribbons carefully beneath her chin.
"I've noticed," she said, "that a cat's appetite and its whiskers have no connection."
"But there is Uncle Jack," expostulated her niece, holding up a long fur lined cloak.
Mrs. Spud drew it over her shoulders. A softened expression came into her eyes at the name, but her tone was still grim. "Why, child, his patient keeps Jack that busy he will never think of the cat. No, it's my duty to go home. Give my love to John and hand me my umbrella, please."
Later Mrs. Spud's niece explained her aunt's departure to John. "Isn't it horrid?" she cried with tears in her eyes. "Think of that old cat's cutting her first visit down to a day and a night!"
John laughed and laid down the carving knife. "It isn't the cat, Mary. Re-



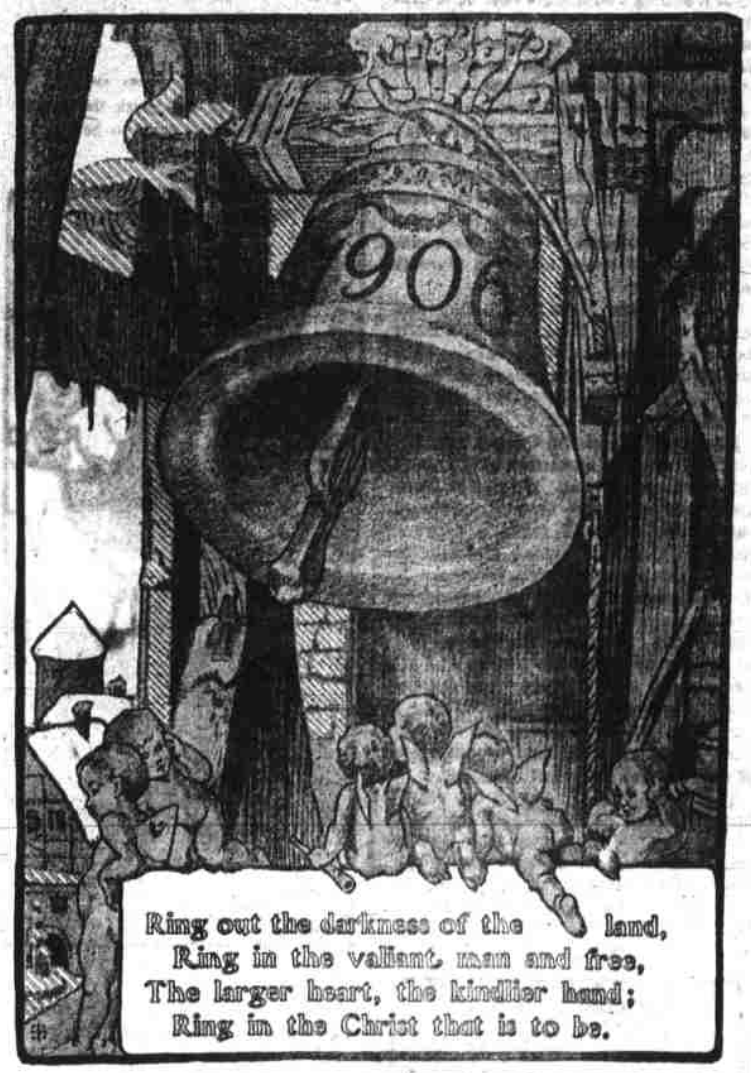
HE LED HER TO THE SAFE.

member this is the first time she and Uncle have been separated twenty-four hours in their married life."
The reason contained in John's remark was the truth, but Mrs. Spud fairly pushing the train along, did not like to admit it because it seemed so childish. Therefore she repeated persistently to herself that if she kept cats she owed it to them not to let them starve.
As the train drew into Stenung station Mrs. Spud's eyes lighted. She sent out a silent welcome to the old station, to the village planted against the snowy hillsides, to the return train waiting on the other side of the platform, the train which had carried her to her niece's previous evening.
As the brakeman eased her descent she curbed her joy and pushed the cat to the foreground of her thoughts. "If I shall have an extra saucer of milk," she remarked firmly to herself.
Just then a familiar voice behind her exclaimed in surprise, "My dear, is this possible?"
Mrs. Spud turned as rapidly as her rotundity permitted, and there before her stood Dr. Spud. He was dressed as if for a journey, but his white head was covered by a tall silk hat. He wore his heavy overcoat and carried in one neatly gloved hand a small grip and umbrella. The other hand he held out in formal greeting, although his face beamed as he looked down at his wife.
Her face beamed also, but she shook hands with no show of eagerness and immediately took her husband's proffered arm.
"Together they trudged up the snow covered path, one tall, straight and white headed, the other short, plump, with glistering silvery hair."
Mrs. Spud, climbing with two steps to the doctor's one, was suddenly thrown into confusion by the question, "Mary Anne, why didn't you finish your visit?"
She took a fresh hold on her husband's arm. "Why, I forgot," to tell you, Jack, what to feed the cat."
The doctor smiled a little in the darkness. He made no comment until he had opened the front door of their home and stood aside for his wife to enter. Then he said hesitatingly, "You have forgotten, my dear, that the cat died in a fit last week."
Mrs. Spud made an inarticulate



MR. SPUD TURNED AS RAPIDLY AS HIS ROTUNDITY PERMITTED.

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Ring out the darkness of the land, Ring in the valiant man and free, The larger heart, the kinder hand; Ring in the Christ that is to be.

the wood shed, his arms full of kindlings.
He paused on the living room threshold and said simply, "I think I'll work awhile in the study this evening, my dear."
She did not allow herself to speak, but nodded at him brightly. Later her lips set themselves firmly as she heard the study door close. She felt hurt at the apparent lack of confidence in her husband's part even in a slight matter. A tear rolled over her still rounded cheek. Then she took herself to task. She rattled the dishes and said aloud to divert her thoughts, "I hope Niece Mary will never learn about that cat."
"My dear," came a voice from the study, "are you speaking?"
She appeared, her hands full of dishes, and smiled loyally at the doctor in the study doorway. "Yes, Jack, I was speaking to myself about—well, about Niece Mary."
Dr. Spud smiled and, closing the door, quietly turned the key. This was the straw that broke the camel's back. Mrs. Spud stood bewildered. She had never heard that key turned against her before. She went back to the kitchen and remained there a long time. She no longer conversed with herself about the cat.
But an hour later, when Dr. Spud unlocked the study door and backed up to the living room stove in his favorite attitude, his nearsighted eyes saw an apparently placid Mrs. Spud comfortably seated in her big rocker, and while he stood, his hands clasped behind him, she read the "locals" aloud, as usual.
The next morning she awoke early and began wondering with an uncomfortable heaviness of heart whether the study fire would be built that day. It was. Directly after tea Dr. Jack again appeared with his arms full of wood and said in his mild, affectionate voice, "My dear, I think I shall occupy the study awhile tonight, and his wife whispered to herself over the diaphan, "Why did I go to Niece Mary's on New Year's day?" and her lip quivered pitifully with the whisper.
Whatever the work was it proved to be a daily task. Until a warm June sun heated the study, Dr. Spud carried his arm full of kindling from the wood shed directly after tea. If he noticed that his wife gradually lusted herself in other parts of the house at that time he made no comment, and the subject, after a few weeks, was never mentioned by either.
As the year wore itself out the people of Stenung began to remark to each other that at last Mrs. Spud was beginning to show her age. If this were true, it was due to the daily turning of the key in the study door. That represented the only sore spot her heart held.
To Dr. Jack she was the same loyal, loving wife that he had always known. Not a shadow from the study door did she allow to fall across her manner with him. Otherwise she would have scorned herself.
But to herself she acknowledged that it was the longest year she had ever spent. This thought was uppermost in her mind as she sat on New Year's eve beside the stove in the living room reading the daily paper. She was alone and had been for a longer time than usual for the study door was closed.
Suddenly the outside doorbell rang. Mrs. Spud laid aside the paper and arose to respond. Before she had reached the door, however, it opened, and a young man came tramping in. "Where's the doctor?" was his unconscious greeting. "Mr. Brown's dying."
Mr. Brown was Dr. Spud's last patient.
"Dying?" cried Mrs. Spud, aghast. She started toward the study door. Her hand was on the knob before she recalled herself. She stopped. She had not once during the year approached that locked door.
"The doctor is in his office," she said in a low tone. "Will you step in and tell him."
The young man gave her a surprised

glance, but obediently rapped on the door, while Mrs. Spud retreated into the kitchen. There she remained only until the sounds indicated that the doctor had reached the front hall. Then she followed him and put him into his greatcoat, tucking him in and patting the corners as she used to do when he faced the storms of a winter night.
With his tall hat in his hand, Dr. Spud stopped suddenly and kissed his wife's forehead. Although affection for her showed in every word and action, such demonstrations on his part were rare, and that kiss seemed to deepen the sore spot in Mrs. Spud's heart.
She returned to the living room with quivering lips and sat down in her chair. Then she noticed that the study door was open and the lamp placed on the writing desk was flaring in the draft. For a long time she sat and watched that lamp. It was her duty to remove it, yet her feet almost refused to carry her into that room.
Finally she forced herself to the door. There she stopped. A chill air struck her. The fire had died down. "Jack ought not to work here in the cold," she said softly, looking about her.
Her eyes traveled slowly around the room, coming to a surprised halt at the safe. It was open. Evidently Dr. Spud had been interrupted in the midst of some unusual task. In the safe and heaped before it on the floor lay a pile of clean white envelopes. From where she stood Mrs. Spud saw they were sealed. She did not go near, she became her senses of honor forbade. She did not retreat because surprise weighed her feet. The flaring lamp and the chill air were forgotten.
She was finally aroused by her husband's voice. He stood beside her. "My dear, you have discovered a little secret of mine."
"His wife started guiltily and looked up into the strong old face which shone down on her tenderly. She could not speak.
Dr. Spud raised her plump left hand and held it in his. "I had not intended you should know until—"
He paused abruptly and led her to the safe. An envelope lay face up on the pile. In a large, irregular, scarcely familiar hand was written, "For my Wife," and following was the date of the previous New Year's day.
"Jack," said Mrs. Spud tremulously. Her husband patted her hand lovingly, the hand that had worn the old fashioned wedding ring so long.
"This may have been a foolish idea, my dear. It came to me last New Year's day after you had gone to your niece's. You had gone on such a little journey, such a short time, yet I was lonely."
He paused a moment. His wife gave a half sob, "Jack!" and the name came straight from a heart which was whole and sweet again.
"That day I was so strongly impressed that it will doubtless be my turn first to take the long journey"—he raised his seventy-year-old face reverently—and that it will be your turn before long."
"His voice broke, and there was a brief silence. Mrs. Spud slipped her other hand between her husband's. The tears were slowly dropping on her cheeks, but they were not tears of pain.
"And so, my dear," the doctor continued, "I did this." He looked down at their feet. "There will be a little message for you each day in the year when the journeying time comes to me. I had intended to keep it all from you as a surprise then—but this is as well that you should know that they are here for you."
Dr. Spud did not go on. He stood with moist eyes smiling down at his wife, and she smiled back with the tears raining over her cheeks.
"Jack," she began. She had so much to tell him about that year, yet the words seemed to hang up against her lips, and all that reached Dr. Spud's ears was that old, incongruous, affectionate name, "Jack! Oh, Jack!"

WHITE and CLEAN IS THE NEW YEAR

By J. A. EDGERTON
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WHITE and clean is the new year
When it is ushered in.
What shall it be in a twelvemonth—
Darkened and rolled by sin?
If we could keep it always white,
How would the world be filled with light!

BRIGHT and sweet is the new day
When on the hills 'tis born.
Cleansed in the fires of sunrise,
Washed by the dew of morn.
If it were sweet till the coming eve,
What a glory on earth 'twould leave!

FAIR and pure is a new life
Seen at the gates of birth.
What will it be at the ending—
Folled with the dross of earth?
If from saint it were ever free,
What a joy to the world 'twould be!



ALL God's days are stainless;
All His days are white;
All His numberless sons
Spotless as is the light.
Fair are His worlds as they wheel and run,
Bathed in the light of their central sun.

ONLY man in delusion,
Hatred and wrong and pain
Sees with an evil vision,
Being divided in twain,
Looks on a life misunderstood,
Makes it evil that erst was good.

CENTER the thought on the noble,
Whiteness of mind and soul;
See the world as God made it,
Virgin and clean and whole;
Look on Him with a single eye,
So let evil and error die.

THEN shall the year be beautiful
As when it came to earth;
Then shall the eve be stainless
As was the day at birth;
Then shall life on its brighter side
Unto the end seem glorified.

The Birthday Of Adam

BOTH the Jews and the Mohammedans regard New Year's Day as the anniversary of the birth, or, rather, the creation, of Adam, which makes it the most ancient holiday in the world. Thousands of years before the Christian era the Persians celebrated New Year's day as their chief religious feast, while the Romans of the republic dedicated it with elaborate ceremonies to the service of the two faced god Janus. In China and Japan the holiday has been celebrated since the time when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. In the Athenian republic newly elected magistrates took office on this day, and in the England of the Celts and Saxons the Druids held the day in particular veneration. Everywhere the dawn of the new year has opened the hearts of the people and bid black melancholy be gone.
The exact date of New Year's day has not always been Jan. 1, of course, for calendars have changed, as has everything else except the elements themselves, and formerly the coming of spring rather than the winter turning of the sun was the basis of reckoning time. Now, however, every civilized country except Russia adheres to the Gregorian calendar and marks the 1st day of January as the first day of the year.
Secretly less than Christmas itself New Year's day is one of universal rejoicing. The copious potations which were so notable a feature of old time New Year's celebrations have lost somewhat of their popularity in this temperate age. In certain countries the wassail retains its primeval vigor,
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