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Ring soft and low ye brazen bells!
 Each mournful note the end foretells
 Of dying year -
 Reverberating, sweet, sublime,
 Your solemn voices lift their chime,
 And as the last tones die away,
 The year is but a memory.

Ring loud and clear, ye silvery bells!
 Each joyful note the birth foretells
 Of glad New Year!
 Herald a true and lasting peace,
 Proclaim that strife and wrong
 shall cease,
 Ring in a deeper, truer sense
 Of God's benign omnipotence.

n. c.

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Who Struck James Whitcomb Riley?

With an Account of His Abandonment of the Watermelon "Habit" More or Less Truthfully Told by THE REVEREND EZEKIL LOUDMOUTH

In order that the reader may understand fully the events leading up to the misadventures herein set forth, a brief sketch of the author is necessary.

The Reverend Ezekil Loudmouth had been the pastor of a colored church in Indianapolis but owing to his inability to recognize the difference between the debit and credit side of the church's collection accounts was deposited; and drifting to Chicago had so effectively "back-slidged" that the sole remains of his ministerial life appeared in his costume and the uncouth use of large and inappropriate words.

The Reverend Ezekil spent most of his waking hours in the various resorts where the gentlemen of his color most do congregate, taking such gigs as the Fates might send in the way of refreshment, and volubly thanking the "Lod" for the drops and crumbs which fell to his share.

Naturally the fare in both forms being of an uncertain quality, the times of famine were in an inverse ratio to the times of plenty and in consequence the talk of feasts to come occupied more hours than their consumption. On this particular occasion the conversation had turned on

risin'?" S'e: "No Reverent; ain't it orful?" S'I: "Yes, an' I don't 'pose to pay it!" S'e: "What you goin' to do? We mus' hab milluns to eat!" S'I: "Br'er Riley, dey's lots o' fahms 'roun' b'yeah, an' on dem fahms dey's heaps o' milluns; an' de fahmab's 'ud be willin' to donate 'em to you mose any night you'll come arter 'em—'vidin' dey can't ketch you." S'I: "I'm goin' out to try ma luck to-night, an' I called 'roun' to see 'f you'd go wid me." S'I: "Foty cents fo' a watah millun is a outrage!" "Went back dat e'v'nin'—as God would hab it—an' Riley say: 'Wait 'tel I git ma hat.' An' 'of we put—down de street—splittin' Injunap'is wide open! Riley had a sot o' hop-light-lady step, an' I wuz a-doin' de Mobile buck."

"Cab'd me out, he did, about fo' miles f'm town, an' stopped right in front up a big ole fahm whah you could h'eah de milluns jes' a-laughin' an' a-talkin' an' a-snikkin' in dey ale'bes, lak dey wuz goin' to buss open."

"Now, sez Riley, 'dis ole feller here raises de bes' milluns in de state; but he keeps a mean dog, an' dey say he watah his patch o' nights wid a shotgun. I don't know how true 't is."

"S'I: 'We'll go whah dey's de bes' milluns, an' take de chances!' S'I: 'I'm done walked too fur to back watah now!' S'I: 'I'm a ole han' at dis business—foller me, an' you'll wuz diamon's.' An' 'L'es keep close together; so's we won't take one nother fur de man.' S'e: 'Greed!'"

"Well, arter we'd bin in dah a while, an' didn't see ner b'yeah nothin', we got bo'; an' raised up an' went to walkin' 'roun' dah, lak we owned de place ('ca'se we wanted de bes' milluns in de patch)—an' I saw he got los' f'm one 'nother.' But we wuz dast to holler. Made up ma mine to tase a piece o' millun, dea fine Riley tase a piece o' millun, dea fine Riley 'n' go home—already had a sackful



It was the night before New Year's. The air was clear and frosty, and the moon and stars were shining down on the sparkling snow that covered the prairie, like the cloth on a round dining table. Toward midnight, if you had peeped from one of the windows of Mr. Blain's farm house, you would have seen what would have appeared to have been a shadow, coming up the road toward the house. As it came nearer you would have seen that it was a little animal about the size of a lamb, with great long ears and a bob-tail, and so white that at a little distance you could not tell it from the snow.

But nobody saw the shadow, for everyone in the house was asleep, except the baby, who was lying wide awake in her little cot at the foot of mother's bed. Just as the clock was striking midnight, there came a gentle tap at the door. Baby heard it, but no one else did, and she climbed out of her cot and ran to the door.

"I commin' Bunnies," she called out as she reached up to the handle and let the little animal in. "Now oo wait a minit 'til baby dets on her coat, Mr. Jack Rabbit."

Then she ran to the drawer and pulled out her little coat and bonnet and mitts and her little foot muffs. Baby had never dressed herself before but at midnight, between the old and the new year, babies can do many wonderful things which they cannot do at any other time, but as they never see them doing these things, as you will not do them while anybody in the house is awake.

It only took baby a few minutes to get on all her clothes. Then she opened the door and she and the jackrabbit went out into the moonlight night. As soon as they were outside the rabbit got down on his knees, and baby etashed on his back and away he scampered, down the road, with baby holding on by his ears.

Soon they were far away from baby's home, so far that they could only see the chimney. At last they came to a hole leading down under the ground. Down this the jackrabbit popped, and stopped up before a little round door. He tapped at the door and waited until it was opened by a fat little woman in a big white apron and a white dusting cap.

Suddenly the music stopped and Grandpa said: "Come now children and have some supper, Grandma's waiting for us."

Then Mr. and Mrs. Jackrabbit lifted each one of them into a high chair and tied a big bib around his or her neck, so that the children would not spill anything on their clothes. And what a feast they had! There were baked apples, ginger bread, doughnuts, cookies, and jam, and afterwards they had nuts, raisins, taffy and popcorn.

"Now Grandpa," said one of the children, with a big piece of taffy in his mouth, "Please tell us where you got this new baby to-night."

"Well," said Grandpa, "last week I was passing Mr. Blain's house and the baby was out playing in the garden. I hid behind the snow man she was building, so that nobody but she could see me, while I told her about the party which we have here every New Year's Eve, and I asked her if she would like to come. When she said she would, I told her not to tell any one, but to be awake at midnight on New Year's night and I would come for her then."

"Es," said Baby Blain, "it was a drefful long time 'til New Year's too I fot it 'ud never tum, but it did tum and I'm having a gate time. Tan I come here again?"

"O yes!" said Grandpa, "We will have another party next year and I hope you will all be here."

"Yes!" cried all the children at once, "we'll all come if we can."

"Well now," said Mrs. Jackrabbit, "some and have a game with Grandma, and then it will be time to go home."

"Let's play tag and we'll all try to catch Grandma," said one of the children, and they all rushed toward her, but Grandma was too quick for them and had darted across the room before any one could catch her. Off they ran after her, Grandpa and all, but Grandma bobbed around like a cork in a pool of water, till she was all out of breath, and then Baby Blain, the youngest one of all, was able to catch her.

"Ho! Ho! Ho! You're caught at last," laughed Mr. Jackrabbit. "Well its time that our little ones were going home for it will soon be daylight."

The children were all sorry that the party was over, but Grandma and Grandpa put on their coats and hoods and muffled them up warm. Then Mrs. Jackrabbit kissed them and wished them all a happy New Year, and told them to be sure to come again the next New Year's Eve, when Grandpa Jackrabbit called for them.

But where was Grandpa? He had disappeared while his wife was kissing the children, and in his place stood the funny little animal with the long ears, which had brought the children there, and which is called a jackrabbit. Grandma lifted the children on his back, all together, and opened the door, and away the rabbit scampered, up the hole and over the snow. When he came to the nearest house, he let one of the children off and then turned down the road, letting a child off at nearly every house he came to. Baby Blain's house was the farthest off of all, and before they reached it, Baby could see that it was beginning to get light away in the East, where the sun rises. The Jackrabbit saw the light too, and flew along, faster than ever, till the wind whistled past Baby's ears, for if he did not get home before daylight, some one might see Jackrabbit and shoot him for their dinner. But it was not long before they came to the Blain house.

"Dood-by, Grandpa," said Baby, as she slid down off the rabbit's back, "and thank oo very much," and the rabbit was off like a shot.

Baby opened the door and then shut and locked it after her, and she was soon all undressed and in her little bed. When father and mother got up, there was the baby, fast asleep, just as she was when they went to bed the night before, and they wondered what made her sleep so late for she was always first awake in the morning. They never found out, however, about the Jackrabbit's party, for Baby had promised not to tell. Baby went again next year, and every year until she was five years old, but after that she could not go any more for the Jackrabbits never had any children over five years old at their parties. She is a big girl now, and her father and mother don't call her Baby any more, but Marguerite, but she will always remember the fun she had at the Jackrabbit's party.

—Montreal Herald.



"Away He Scampered, Down the Road With Baby Holding on by His Ears."

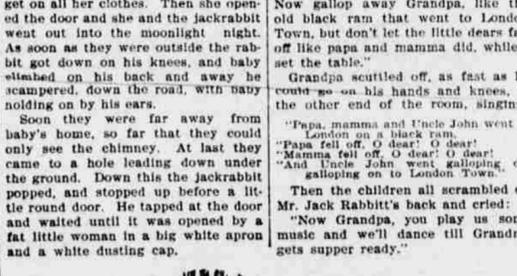
into little animals like rabbits when we go out, but when we are at home, we are little men and women."

Grandma Jack Rabbit went over to the stove at the other end of the kitchen, where she had a big pot of taffy boiling, some corn popping, a big pan of chestnuts roasting in the oven, and some other things cooking for the children's supper, and Grandpa began to play with the children. Oh! What fun they had! They played "Drop the Handkerchief," "Nuts in May," "Here Comes a King Arriving," "Green Gravel," "Blind Man's Buff," and every game they knew. Then Grandpa got down on his hands and knees and took them for a ride on his back all around the room and over to where Grandma was pulling the golden taffy that had been boiling on the stove.

"Here's a piece of taffy for each one of my babies," laughed Grandma. Now gallop away Grandpa, like the old black ram that went to London Town, but don't let the little dears fall off like papa and mamma did, while I set the table."

Grandpa scuttled off, as fast as he could go on his hands and knees, to the other end of the room, singing: "Papa, mamma and Uncle John went to London on a black ram. Papa fell off, O dear! O dear! Mamma fell off, O dear! O dear! And Uncle John went galloping on, galloping on to London Town."

Then the children all scrambled off Mr. Jack Rabbit's back and cried: "Now Grandpa, you play us some music and we'll dance 'til Grandma gets supper ready."



"Dood-by, Grandpa," said Baby.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the little woman as she took the baby off the jackrabbit's back, and nearly smothered her with kisses. "Here is another little guest at Grandma Jack Rabbit's New Year's party. Now Jack, shut the door or you will freeze the little dears. Now baby let me take off your coat and

So Grandpa took the funniest looking black stick out of his pocket, and put it up to his mouth, but you ought to have heard the beautiful music that came out of that stick. It was magic and any one could dance to it even if they had never danced before, nor even seen any one dancing.

On New Year's Day.

It is a beautiful and profitable custom, this which we celebrate as the cold sun shines on each successive first of January. There are seventy hills in the short journey of human life, and as we reach each one in turn we lay our burdens down for a short respite, gather our friends together, recall the past, forecast the future and with kindly greeting wish each other a happy arrival at the next hill, then take up our burdens once more and enter the valley that lies between the two elevations. It is a day of good cheer, of fraternal assembly. The air is full of happy thoughts and good wishes. The whole world is brighter for it, for heart goes out to heart, and universal sympathy lifts us for a time to a higher level. Earth

Aunt Lucindy's Christmas Party

Aunt Lucindy Wilson wuz de bes' cook in de town. She baked a Christmas dinner, an' she axed us to come down. Dah wuz 'possum on de table, an' it axed up de a'h. An' de culled population come a-flockin' 'evahwhin'.

Pompey Smash, de culled dandy, come dah in his Sunday bes'; "Bow-lah Ben, f'm Happy Hollah," he wuz dah widout his vos'; "Putty Sue" an' Sally Johnson; Pahson Brown an' Deacon Green; Lahud; we wuz de happiest dahkies ole Virginny evah wuz!

Ought to see Aunt Cindy's 'possum!—Bin a com'ot to yo' soul!—Serevel 'tains layin' 'roun' it, lak so many lamps o' gold!—Pie an' cake wuz on dat table; co'n-pone, cabbage; simmon beer—Does you wonder dat de dahkies flocked 'roun' 'em fur an' a seat?

Aunt Lucindy's Christmas Party

When de pahson an' de deacon let, we tuck a social cup; An' Hick Henderson, de fiddiah, 'gun to chunns his fiddle up. Den we played games an' drunk cider—'an' de mosses 'ny it, long!—Evah las' one uv us dahkies felt as rich as any Jew.

Den, de way we went to daucin' wuz a scallus, aintul shame! But de music kep' a-playin'; an', ob co'se we wa'n't to blame. Heels, quadrilles, "hoe-downs" an' dances; an' de ole-time pigeon-wing; Waltzes; "essence uv Virginny;" "All-han's-roun'"—an' evahthin'.

Tell you whut, 'twas nealy day-brake when we all got stahed home—Evah feller wid his lady—'cross de hel's, we wa'n't to come. But ouch 'rahts wah light an' cheer'd as de silvah night wah gran'. Wid de wintah moon a-shine' ovah all de happy lan'.

—J. D. Corrothers.

The Young New Year.

We welcome thee, oh, glad young prince, And trust our fate within thy hands; Oh, let thy coming to us be A grateful blessing in our lands. Where pain and sorrow dare to tread, Be thou a soothing friend to cheer— And though the dear old year be dead, May you a greater friend appear. —Mrs. Alice C. Whitman in Brooklyn Eagle.

is a little more comforting and heaven a little dearer. Some new faces have come and

