

THE NEW BERN MIRROR

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ON PICKING PARENTS

We would be the first to agree that extreme care should always be exercised when authorities permit a child in their charge to be adopted. It is a momentous decision to make.

However, it seems to us that all too frequently the emphasis is placed on material advantages the child will receive, rather than the love and kindness it will fall heir to.

Far be it from us to suggest removing a youngster from a well equipped orphanage and subjecting it to an environment of abject poverty. However, we can think of lots of things worse, including some orphanages, than being reared in a respectable middle-class home.

There's something woefully wrong when childless couples who are known to be conscientious, God-fearing and thoroughly reliable try in vain for years to adopt a baby to call their very own.

Yet, such things happen again and again. Various New Bernians have had this sad experience. Countless thousands, throughout the nation, have had it too.

So prevalent is this sort of thing that many couples have purchased babies on the black market. We don't condone it, but it's pathetic that anyone respectable would deem it necessary to take such steps in order to provide a home for a child who needs a home.

All of us like to tell the other fellow how to run his business. In telling authorities who handle adoptions how to run theirs, we would like to suggest a few items that should weigh heavily in governing their decisions.

First and foremost is a genuine love for children. It would seem, perhaps, that all prospective parents by the very nature of their request are exhibiting this love. Such, unfortunately, is not always the case.

Loving a child involves much more than petting and baby talk. It calls for sleepless nights when a curly head is burning with fever. It calls for patience and understanding, and doing without so your own kids can have the advantages that you didn't have.

An adopted child has every right to be in a home where the possibilities of eventual divorce are remote. Divorce, with or without children, may be the only solution on many occasions, but it is a sad fact that a majority of criminals behind bars today came from broken homes.

A child, adopted or otherwise, belongs in a home where he will find an awareness of God, a respect for law and order, and above all a respect for all mortals, whether they happen to be rich folks of high social position, or folks who are doing the best they can on the wrong side of the railroad tracks.

Very few homes reach the ultimate in this sort of evaluation. As a matter of fact, we who happen to be parents must in all honesty admit that we can hardly measure up to the fullest extent.

Yet, somehow or other, we manage to rear our brood, just as the parents of adopted children manage to rear theirs. And in the rearing, sacrificing notwithstanding, and all our quirks and failings, we find a mutual joy that takes us close to Heaven itself.

If you ask us, we need more adoptions, like the adoptions here in New Bern that have worked out so wonderfully. The easier that these adoptions can be made, with a minimum of red tape and a maximum of common sense in properly evaluating prospective parents, the better it will be for tots who need a Mom and Dad.

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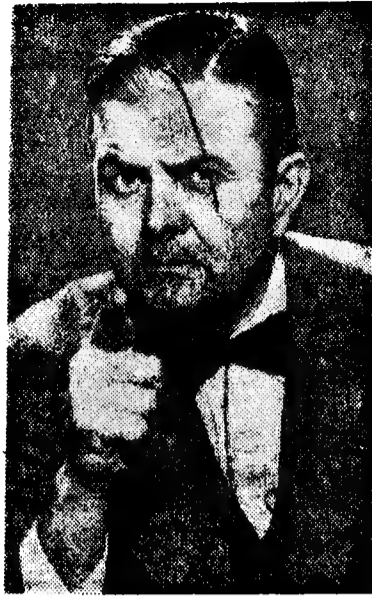
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A former member of General Douglas MacArthur's staff, the Atlanta executive sustained a spinal injury in a wartime plane mishap, culminating in a stroke of paralysis.

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However, he considers his most important business the spreading of the gospel. Those who have heard him say that a religious message delivered by this strapping ex-Army officer is inspiring and unforgettable.

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Whenever Summer comes again, and flowers bless our street,
I get to hate the sight of shoes—they seem to cramp my feet;
And little boys who scamper by, with toes quite unconfined,
Bring further pangs of misery, and upset one's peace of mind.
I watch them as they kick up dust, or splash about in rain,
Recalling happy days of old, along a country lane;
I must admit that shoes are nice, in Winter's ice and snow,
But with the early breath of Spring to attics they should go.
We grown-ups are real civilized about the things we wear,
And conscious of the latest styles, they're always picked with care;
We seldom think of comfort, when we thumb through fashion books,
It doesn't matter how clothes feel—what we want is looks.
That's why, when Summer rolls around, our job can't be complete,
It wouldn't be so dignified to go with naked feet;
But dignity, and foolish pride, a youngster never knows,
Unhampered by conventions, he can still unveil his toes.
I envy him his freedom, as he scampers unconfined,
And 'til the Summer days are gone I won't have peace of mind.

—JGMcD.

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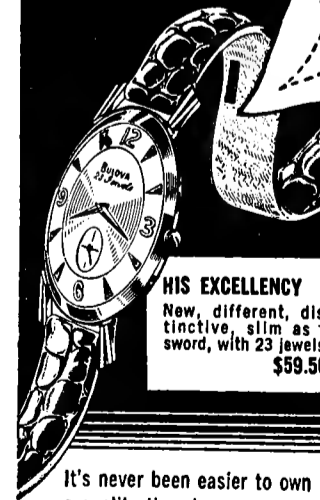
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