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LETTER FROM BILKINS

Zeke Wants to be an Alderman—Thinks He is the Man to Save Money for the People and Cause Reforms to be Made—Betsy, Being in Politics Will Canvass for Zeke—Bob is Full of Politics and is Ready for the Campaign.

Correspondence Raleigh Enterprise. Bilkinsville, N. C., March 21, 1907.

Mister Editor:—Sinse the spring buds began to show their heads, the sap seams ter be rizin' in my veins, an' I can't help frum thinkin' the Lord caused me to be on this here earth in order to be a helper fer my feller man. I think that by bein' an Alderman I could reform the town in a hundred different ways. There seams ter be a certain set ov men who run fer perlittical honors, who, after their election do nothing but draw the honors ov their offis, and don't care a continental darn fer the people's interest. Fer instance, they, if thy hev property they will have their sidewalks fixed an' leeve evrybody else's alone. They seam ter be in a state ov innocuous desuetude, when they should be up an' speakin' fer their constituents. I am in favor ov hier wages fer the workin' man an' woman, shorter hours in the factory, houses with good gardens fer renters, better sidewalks, more parks fer the nurses with baby carrages, more paved streets, more public fountains with ice water, more perleecemen, better graded skules; more shade trees, kompulsory educashun, street cars with double seats, and a hole lot ov other reforms fer which our people hev bin askin' fer in vane. If elected, I promise to do awl these things, an' will not run fer the offis next time.

Betsy, being leader ov the Woman's Sufferin' Club, iz now makin' a house ter house canviss fer me ter be an alderman; she offers awl kinds ov indusements—to sell two heads ov cabbage fer five cents, whar she used ter get ten cents fer two heads, if they will only vote fer Zeke. She knows Zeke will make a great city offiscer an' thinks he will awlso help her out in her sufferidge business.

Bob is in trim fer me ter ride to the presinks. He and I air out every day on the "war path" fer votes. Hit iz the konsensus ov opinion that I will beat my opponent two ter one, fer aldermanic honors in the fust division of the Furst Ward in Bilkinsville.

Yours as ever,
ZEKE BILKINS.

Are Your Feet Untangled?

He was a little, old negro, gray and black and bent. With axe in hand he came to cut a load of wood. "What's your name?" I asked. "Archie Brown, boss," was the reply. "How old are you?" "Gwine on eighty-fo', sah." "Well, Uncle Archie, if the Lord were to call you to go home this afternoon, would you be willing to go?"

A reminiscent look swept over his face, and, pushing his hat back, he leaned on his axe, chuckled to himself, and said, "Boss, I'm dest a-waitin' wid my footsies ontangled." A few months later I heard that Uncle Achie was dead, and I thought it must have been easy for him to leave.—Churchman.

Cat Happiness.

I know what makes a cat happy. A saucer of milk, a soft chair or cushion in a warm corner, a hand to stroke its fur and my cat will purr like a teakettle. Now I haven't much desire to purr. It would sound too much like snoring. And the cat's pleasures are only now and then for me.

When I come to think of my own happy year, I do not want to be happy all alone in a corner. I have sometimes thought that if my cat could only read instead of sleeping, she would like to get a story-book in a warm corner all by herself, with a pocket full of candy, when the other cats are out at play, as I have seen children do. But that is doing the cat injustice. Kittens always play together, and cats have no pockets. And of course there are times to read—every child knows that.

There is another kind of cat-happiness which I do not want for my happy year, and that is night prowling, when there is so much to do and learn at home and in friends' houses. I do not want to go to school in the streets.

I know what will make my dog happy and I sometimes think he is the very happiest thing alive. If I put on my hat and open the door, though he seems to be fast asleep on his rug in the corner, he will be up like a flash and ready for a walk. And he will go five miles where I go one, exploring all the hedges of the road and making excursions into the thickets, running back now and then to tell me that he loves me. It is so easy to make a dog happy that I am tempted to do it oftener than I should. And one thing about my dog I like best of all, he gets his happiness in sharing mine. I suspect the cat would not mind if I were in pain and distress so long as she had her milk and cushion and her stroking. But the dog knows in a moment when I am unhappy; and when I am joyful he jumps and capers and wags his tail for joy.

I would like to be as happy as my unselfish dog is in the woods and fields, but God has made me more than a dog. What I really want is to be man-happy. That must mean not being dependent on a saucer of milk (or any other helps of laziness) or even on having my fur rubbed the right way (or any other sort of praise or flattery). I assure you that I am not wishing any of you a cat-happy, or even a dog-happy year.

First of all, I wish for us all a growing happiness. They used to talk when I was a child of "growing pains," but growing happiness is just as real. Perhaps a better name would be victorious happiness—the joy of overcoming. Even the plants know that. When you put a seed into the ground—a pea or a bean, let us say, because they are big enough to be easily watched—it pushes a root down and a stem up and conquers itself a place. Unless a plant can conquer it withers and dies. This happiness of overcoming is better than what I called cat-happiness, because it requires work. And its great task for us humans is in overcoming our own selfish love of ease. A boy has to conquer himself before he can get up in the morning or solve a problem in arithmetic or go on an errand for his

mother. And by that overcoming happiness grows.

Did you boys ever notice that so long as you hold a ball tight in your own hand you cannot have the pleasure of catching it? If you want to have a good time, you throw it to some one else, who returns it, or at least against a wall so that it may come bounding back to be caught. The best sort of happiness is sometimes like that. It is good for nothing until it is thrown away. I should like our happy year to hold a good deal of self-forgetting.

Of course, I do not mean that we are to reckon it all out. "If I, Tommy, give some of my cake to Harry, when he has cake he will give me some of his." That sort of thing is only a different sort of selfishness and results in anger when Harry gets his cake and forgets to give Tommy some. Tommy's real happiness is in giving and helping without any thought of what comes after.

I know a man who has a well on his place which never runs dry. In a drought all the neighbors come with pails and buckets from their empty springs to his never-failing well. I should like to have our new year's happiness like that man's well, always full and ready to provide for others in the dry, unhappy times. And that can only come to you and me when the springs of our happiness are fed from the unfailing treasure of God. It is Christ who gives the living water and he gives it for us to share.—The Congregationalist.

As Cross as a Bear.

"You're as cross as a bear," said Bess to Billy.

Uncle Jim whistled. "Bears aren't cross to members of their own family," he said. "Now, I knew a bear once—"

Bess and Billy both ran to him and climbed up on his lap.

"Did you really every know a bear?" cried Billy, with wide open eyes.

"Well, not intimately," said Uncle Jim, "but I used to go hunting them when I was up in Canada, and one day I was out with a hunting party, and we saw right straight in front of us—what do you suppose?"

"A real bear!" gasped the children in concert.

"Yes, a real mother bear and her little son. The dogs started after them, and the mother bear began to run, but the little baby son couldn't run as fast as she did, and the dogs were gaining on him, so what do you suppose the mother bear did? Leave her little son behind? No, sir-ee-ee. She picked the baby up on her stout nose and tossed him ahead; then she ran fast and caught up to him and gave him another boost that sent him flying through the air. She kept this up for a mile and a half. Then she was too tired to go any farther, and the dogs surrounded her. Then she sat up on her haunches, took her baby in her hind paws and fought the dogs off with her fore-paws. And how she did roar!"

Bess shuddered. "You could hear her miles away. She never forgot her baby; kept guarding him all the time. When the mother was shot the baby cub jumped on her dead body and tried to fight off the dogs with his little baby paws. That's the way the bears

stand by each other. Sometimes I think they love each other better than brothers and sisters. Hey, Bess, what are you crying about? I guess I won't tell you any more bear stories if that is the way you feel."

"Billy," sobbed Bess, "you're as good—as good as a bear!"

Then they all laughed together and forgot what they had been cross about.—New York Tribune.

"A Bird in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush."

This saying originated from the following circumstances:

Will Somers, the celebrated jester to Henry VIII., happened to call at my Lord Surrey's, whom he had often, by well-timed jests, saved from the displeasure of his royal master, and who consequently was always glad to see him. He was on this occasion ushered into the aviary, where he found my lord amusing himself with birds. Somers happened to admire the plumage of a king-fisher.

"By my lady," said Surrey, "my prince of wits, I will give it you."

Will skipped about with delight, and swore by the great Harry he was a most noble gentleman. Away went Will with his king-fisher, telling all his acquaintances whom he met that his friend Surrey had just presented him with it.

Now it so happened that my Lord Northampton, who had seen this bird on the day previous, arrived at my Lord Surrey's just as Will Somers had left, with the intention of asking it of Surrey for a present to a lady friend. Great was his chagrin on finding the bird gone. Surrey, however, consoled him with saying that he knew Somers would restore it him if he (Surrey) promised him two another day.

Away went a messenger to the prince of wits, whom he found in raptures with his bird, and to whom he delivered his lord's message. Great was Will's surprise, but he was not to be bamboozled by even the monarch himself. "Sirrah," says he, "tell your master that I am obliged for his liberal offer of two for one, but that I prefer one bird in the hand to two in the bush."

Hence originated this oft-repeated saying.—Harper's Young People.

The Largest Diamond in the World.

The American Magazine reports graphically the discovery of the largest diamond in the world—a diamond which weighs in the rough, 3,024½ carats. Translated into understandable terms it is a stone weighing a pound and a third. Until the discovery of this wonderful gem the world's record in diamonds was held by the "Excelsior"—a stone of 969 carats—nearly a half pound avoirdupois. Three years ago the "Excelsior," which was badly flawed, was cut up into ten stones valued at \$415,000. This in turn utterly eclipsed all the other great diamonds of the world. Thus: Kohinoor (after first cutting), 279 carats; Nizam, of Hyderabad, 279 carats; Regent, or Pitt, 137 carats; Duke of Tuscany, 133 carats; Tiffany (yellow), 125 carats; Orloff, 194 carats; Star of the South, 124 carats.

Our truest prayers are but the echoes of God's promises.