

BILL ARPS LETTER

Bill is Sick But is Able to Talk.

Atlanta Constitution.

Kind friends, please forbear. I know that the time for compositions and debates and essays is near at hand, but I am sick and cannot help you this spring. I am weak and don't want to strain my mind. I haven't been out of the house but twice in three months. My wife and the doctor watch me and won't let me go. A few weeks ago I slipped off to my daughter's one pleasant evening and had to be hauled back in a buggy, for it is up hill to my house, and I was weaker than I thought. You see I had a sunstroke last June and have never recovered from it. Every night, if the weather is bad, I have to get up about midnight and sit by the fire and cough for an hour or two. But I can answer letters and have from a dozen to a score every day. It pleases me to answer the letters of the young folks, for many of them need help. I know that I did when I was away from school. My father was an old school teacher and knew how to help me. He wrote nearly all of my junior orator's speech and I got credit for it, though I only crossed the t's and dotted the i's and put my name to the end of it. But there are hundreds of boys and girls who have no help and are sorry for that, and so for many years past I have tried to help them. Some of them just want help a little, a few ideas, but others want the whole thing. In fact, one boy asked me to write him two so that he could take choice. Many of them forgot to enclose a stamp and my postage account got to be such a burden that, as Rip Van Winkle said, "I swore off" and quit answering such letters. It is bad manners to write to a man on business that does not concern him and expect him to pay the return postage. I receive many long manuscripts with request to read and criticize and return and tell where to have published and what the writer will probably get paid for them. I have two on hand, just received—no stamps enclosed—one is a grammatical curiosity. Hardly a line that does not contain bad grammar or a misspelled word. It takes nearly half a line for the word "spectacles" and it has fourteen letters in it. The word angel is spelled angle, and yet the writer expects to get paid for the story.

The other manuscript is an inquiry into the race problem—no stamps—and it contains seventeen questions for me to answer. Another long letter on fool's cap writes of the good old times and says in conclusion that if I will answer it he will write me again and put his name to the next letter. There is no name to this. He is an Irishman, I reckon. One other request I wish to make about letters. Please place your postoffice address plainly at the bottom. Many a time I have passed a letter all around the family trying to decipher the signature. Sometimes I have cut the signature off and pasted it on the back of the reply, thinking that probably the postmaster at the writer's home would recognize it. If the postoffice is omitted and the postmark on the envelope is blurred, as it frequently is, it is impossible to know where a reply should be sent, and if I guess at it and guess wrong it goes to the dead letter office. Now you young people must not forget these little things, for they are important, especially the stamps. Sometimes we literary men are greatly perplexed to know what to do with some letters. One more request. Do not write to me at Atlanta. I do not live there. My home is Cartersville, and I thought everybody knew it by this time. I have been living here over twenty years.

And now let me ask the good charitable ladies who seek to do something for some good cause to send no more endless chain letters to me. They are a nuisance, and have annoyed me greatly. I thought that when that common cheat and swindler Joel Smith of Monticello, Fla., was broken up and arrested the endless chain business had stopped, but of late it has revived and I received three last week. One of them started in Canada, for a so-called missionary work and got all the way down to Louisiana, and from there to me, wanting me to copy two letters and send ten cents in Oct 1st's name, and under no circumstances to break the chain. Well, I broke it and shall break every one that comes to me, and shall burn the letters for they never contain any return postage. Some years ago the good ladies of Fredericksburg, Va., wrote to me saying they wanted about \$500 or \$600 to place headstones to the graves of 260 Georgia soldiers who were buried there. I made an earnest appeal to our people and asked for a dollar from each good man or woman, and I raised \$300 in three weeks. Adjutant General Phil Byrd sent me \$2 all the way from New Brunswick. I bought the

A Queer Superstition.

Raleigh, March 27.—A strange negro superstition is discovered here. Two policemen were carrying a negro man to the station house and when asked what was his offence one of them remarked that he was a chicken thief and had been found with the chickens in his possession, in other words, was caught at night with the chickens in a bag. A negro standing near, who heard the policeman's statement, said with a smile: "Dat nigger didn't have his bone with him." When asked what he meant by this he said: "I mean he didn't have his cat bone in his pocket 'round his neck in a bag."

The negroes believe, certainly a great many of the older ones, that the possession of what they call a "cat bone" gives the owner invisibility, a quality of prime necessity to a chicken thief. The bone in question is the tail bone of a cat, and must be none other than a black cat, and must be further procured in no other way than by putting the cat while alive into a pot and boiling it away until the skeleton can be lifted out and the tail bone obtained.

John T. Ross, a white man, who was several years a guard of State convicts, says that one of these during the noon hour one day obtained permission to build a fire and do some cooking. He produced from a bag a black cat and dropped it into the pot wherein the water was boiling. Several other convicts gathered around in the proceedings, particularly when later in the afternoon the convict got out the desired bone. He explained his desire for this ownership by saying that after he had served his term he might want to go into the "chicken business."

The matter came up again as to the cat bone in rather an amusing way. While walking in a part of the city inhabited entirely by negroes, several large chicken coops in a yard were noticed, all empty. A short passage led from the street to the coops, which was narrow and immediately at one side of the house. Under the house was a very savage bulldog who had plenty of chain to enable him to reach the passage way. When the darky owner of the house was asked what had become of all his chickens, he replied, with an air of marked sadness: "One night las' week dey cum er'long and stole evry one un'em." When asked why the dog did not get the darling thief the owner of the dog said, with a very apologetic manner: "De dog couldn't see the thief nohow, for the rasal had de bone wid him. Of course nobody and no beast either can see 'em when dey have de bone."

A number of negroes believe in this bone business who are ashamed to own it. There is a growing sentiment among the negroes of concealing superstition, because they hear it ridiculed, and not a few of them believe in it just the same.—Charlotte Observer.

Crime of Bigamy.

To the Editor of The State: In a recent editorial paragraph you called attention to the fact that it is getting to be deplorably common for the newspapers in South Carolina to publish accounts of bigamy cases, and you also remark that the nomadic life led by the mill operatives renders the family relations uncertain.

We fear that as factories are multiplied, and the factory population increases, bigamy will also increase, and in many instances the law will be powerless. Suppose that a man in one factory town leaves his wife and children, takes an assumed name and runs off with another woman to a factory town where they are both total strangers, who in that town is to apply the law to them? Who is to even know that they are not legally husband and wife?

It is said an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and we honestly believe that marriage licenses, to some extent, would be a preventive of bigamy. Let the law require that it be stated where each of the contracting parties are from and let the license be recorded. Such a law, we think, would cause the marriage tie to seem more binding. The contracting parties would feel that as the marriage was recorded, it would be a more risky business recorded. At least it seems so to us.

Times change and new things are needed, and among the laws which South Carolina needs is one providing for marriage licenses. Anything which is conducive to morality, is a public benefit, and if marriage licenses will check the growing spirit of bigamy (and we believe they will), then it is the duty of the general assembly to give us such a law.

McDonald Furman, Privateer, Sumter Co., March 25, 1903.

CASTORIA. The Kind You Have Always Bought Bears the Signature of

When they have been measured, most heroes have been found to come in half sizes. —It's terrible for a girl to have a tiny freckle on her upper lip.

Sparrows Started a Fire.

"Savin' them fire engines reminds me of the time my house burned several years ago," said a countryman the other evening as he stood on Monroe street watching the fire apparatus clatter by. "For a long time there was considerable mystery about the blaze, and I was about to accuse a neighbor of mine of settin' the place afire, because I had kind o' swindled him in a horse trade. But he was as innocent as a baby, I found out later.

"I woke up one night and the smoke was pourin' through the house. It seemed to be comin' from up-stairs—we had one of them big farm houses, you know—and I tumbled out o' bed, and in about two jumps landed at the top of the stairs. The flames was a-regin' all along one side of the house just under the eaves and farin' up under the rafters. We had no way of fighting the fire, and all we could do was to save a few things.

"The insurance company gave me a pile o' trouble, but finally paid me. They declared the house was set afire, and I kind o' thought so, too, but I wasn't a-goin' to say so. Well, sir, that thing set so on my mind that I resolved to play Sherlock Holmes and find out what started the blaze.

"What do you suppose did it? English sparrows. Yes, sir, English sparrows was the cause of me losin' my home and nearly everything in it. There was a big shed near the house, and on the side that burned first. I was studying how the fire could have been started under the eaves, when I remembered the sparrows had built a lot of nests there. I began tearin' the nests out of the shed, and among the sticks and straws I found a lot of matches. I remembered then about droppin' a box of the matches in the yard, and when I found it most of the matches was gone. The birds had carried them away and used them in building the nests. Of course I didn't know just how the matches got fired, but I am certain the sparrows were to blame for burnin' the house down. When I built a new house I fixed it so the only place a sparrow could light on it was on top of the roof."—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Will be Reunited.

New Bedford, Mass., March 25.—After an absence of forty years Edwin Dow, of Newark, N. J., who accumulated a fortune out West, is to remarry his wife.

Dow some time after his marriage disappeared, leaving word that he would not return until he had made his fortune and could give his family a better home. A few years later Mrs. Dow secured a divorce and was married to Captain W. J. Norton.

Dow made his fortune and returning found his wife happily married. He made himself known to his daughter, and pledging her to secrecy, told her his story. She was only to reveal the secret upon Capt. Norton's death. Captain Norton died two years ago and Dow came on from the West, and meeting his former wife, asked her to remarry him. She consented, and the marriage will take place Sunday.

The sense of guilt adds stings to our griefs.

Moving a River.

Until about the beginning of the last decade all the geography classes in our schools were taught, and correctly, that the city of Vicksburg, Miss., made historic during the Civil War, was situated on the bank of the Mississippi River. This statement, however, ceased to be a fact some ten or more years ago, when the Father of Waters, in one of his erratic moods, forced a new channel for himself and left Vicksburg perched on a high bluff several miles inland. The town, which had been one of the most important steamboat ports on the big stream, was thus suddenly deprived of much of the traffic that had caused it to prosper. Strangely enough the misfortune was an echo of the famous siege of Vicksburg, and Gen. U. S. Grant was primarily responsible for it. In order that the Union gunboats might run past the shore batteries unharmed Grant sought to divert the waters of the Mississippi away from the city by digging a new channel. The great river refused at the time to take the new course marked out for it, but it eventually did so, more than thirty years after such action could be of any use to the Union army.

Naturally the people of Vicksburg did not accept with good grace the Mississippi's belated performance, so damaging to their material interests. They clamored for a restoration of the old days when they dwelt near navigable water and when stately floating palaces touched at their wharves and trade flourished. They appealed to Congress for aid and the national lawmakers made an appropriation for constructing a canal northward to the Yazoo River. This canal was recently completed and the water was let into the channel deserted by the Mississippi. The flow was abundant and filled the space from bank to bank, making Vicksburg once more a river town.

The event caused general rejoicing in the city, which has already begun to feel the good effects of renewed traffic.—Leslie's Weekly.

Would Take Care Of Himself.

At an East Side kindergarten a few days ago a visitor gave a silver dollar to a bright little boy.

"Now," she said, "what are you going to do with it?"

"I'll have it changed into halves," said the boy without a moment's hesitation.

"And then?" asked the questioner.

"I'll get quarters."

"And then?"

"I'll get dimes, and then nickels, and then pennies."

"What will you do then?" asked the visitor smiling.

"I'll get nickels," said the boy.

"But why will you get nickels when you already have them?"

"Huh," answered the bright youth, "somebody may make a mistake in change. And it won't be me."—Exchange.

The fun of being a fool over a woman is the enjoyment you get out of the fun she gets out of it.

You must never tell a girl when you are going to kiss her—nor anybody else after you have gone and done it.

Schlitz Beer advertisement with logo and text: The best of barley, hops and yeast, selected by one of our partners. Pure water, from six wells driven down to rock. Pure air, which has first passed through an air filter. Every drop of Schlitz Beer filtered by machinery through masses of white wood pulp. Every bottle sterilized, so that it contains no germs. Thus we double the necessary cost of our brewing to make purity certain—to make Schlitz Beer healthful. Will you drink common beer, and pay just as much for it, when Schlitz Beer can be had for the asking. Ask for the Brewery Bottling.

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