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## LETTER FROM BILKINS.

**Mrs. Bilkins Always Interrupts Him with Questions When He is at Peace—He Wants a Female Legislature and Tells How it will Probably Start Business.**

Correspondence of the Enterprise.

Wimin folks air nice ter hev eround, an' they air worth a gude deal ter the country. But they air a powerful lot ov truble, too. I wuz sittin' readin' the other nite erbout the legislater an' whut hit iz doin' ter relleve sufferin' humanity an' pecteek fish an' things an' wuz at peece with the wurld till Betsy disturbed me erbout nothin'. She remarked that she had hearn hit sed that if March cums in like a lamb hit will be sure ter go out like a lion. "Zeke, whut do you think erbout that sayin'?" she axed.

"Yes, yes," said I, "hit will go out like a lion or a billy goat, or sumpthin' ov thet sort, if hit cums in like a lamb. Please don't disterb me."

She 'lowed, "there you go now! You can't anser a sivil question without raisin' a rookus. I wish the legislater would pass a law ter make husbands sivil ter their wives. I wanter live ter see the day when we hev nothin' but wimin in the legislater. We will never git our rites till that day cums."

"I hope ter goodness hit will cum myself," sez I. "Anything fer, a change." The men pollytishins hev erbout gone ter seed. The present ginerall assembly aint much more than a meetin' ov grandmothers who think that the State hed gone ter the dickins before they met an' that they hev saved hits life with urb tea an' bred poltyes. They hev put in sixty days passin' laws that they won't abide by an' that they wouldn't hev passed if they thought anybody would enforse one-half ov 'em.

Yes, let us hev a wimin legislater, cumposed ov married wimin, ole mades an' gigglin' girls. Hit will beat a sircus. Every blasted one ov them will be Speaker of the House an' they will awl talk at once, but, of course, the one that iz elekcted Speaker ov the House will talk erbout fourteen times az much az the other members an' Senators. They will elek several new cummittees. They will be a cummittee on millinery, a cummittee on matchin' goods, an' a cummittee on fashions. I hope my wife will git erlekcted. If she does I'll be boss at home fer sixty days enyhaw. Oh! hit will be rich. Hit will take twenty new hotels at Raleigh ter hold the folks whut will go ter see the show.

Ov Course Frankie D. Winston will preside over the Senate az the constertushion purvides. But a female Speaker will be elekcted. When that seremony iz over she will deliver a speech ov thanks erbout like this: "Feller members an' tax-burdened feller-sitizens, I take grate pleasure in risin' ter thank you fer the grate honor you hev thrust upon me. We hev had ter wate four thousand years ter git our rites. For the first time in history a woman hez bin elekcted ter the highest offis in the conduct ov a grate legislative body. I must confess that this waz very suddent. But I prepared fer hit before I left home an' bought a

new silk dress an' gloves an' hat ter match. Feller members, we air responsible ter the peeple ov this grate State an' must not only do our duty, but we must set a gude example. I hope no member of the legislature will fergit ter wear at least three different dresses each day an' that the costumes will fit your cumpleckshuns. In order that we may get the full benefit ov our evenin' dresses, we will begin ter hev nite seshions rite frum the start. The sargent-at-arms will see that none ov our members attend more than two bargain sales per week an' brake a quorum.

"Feller members, we must not let the grate banner ov demockrasy trail in the dust. I see that sum ov you hev brought your wurk baskets an' fancy wurk erlong. Az Speaker ov this House, I will rule that needle wurk an' crowshayin' can only be done while bills air bein' discussed.

"Again thankin' you, we will now begin business. The first short seshion will close with a solo by the beautiful an' brilliant member frum Durham County, Miss Margerite Dimple, the song being, "Let the Ladies Do the Work."

Yes, hit will be a sircus.

Truly,

ZEKE BILKINS.

## 40 BLOCKS SWEEP BY FIRE.

### First Reports of Losses in Hot Springs Not Exaggerated.

Hot Springs, Ark., Feb. 26.—The first estimates of the damage done by the great conflagration were not exaggerated. More than forty city blocks have been eaten away by the flames, and the most conservative estimates place the loss at \$1,500,000, while several insurance men say the figures will reach \$2,000,000.

The three unknown bodies recovered are the only known fatalities.

The citizens' relief association has the situation well in hand. The amount subscribed for relief work totals \$12,000 tonight, and the sum is being steadily increased.

Mayor Belding ordered all saloons closed and it was a "tight Sunday" in the town.

According to a statement issued to-night by the mayor, the fire-swept area lies principally in the residence portion of the city. While the loss is enormous, the principal business portion of Hot Springs, including the hotels and bath houses, are not affected. The city, the statement continues, has ample accommodations for all who may desire to visit it for health or pleasure, and no advance in rates will be tolerated.

The relief committee has systematized its work to such an extent that no deserving person rendered destitute by the conflagration has suffered for the ordinary comforts of life.

Nearly every residence in the city has been thrown open to such persons, and the management of the Oakland race track has tendered the use of its grand stand and cottages.

The devastated district will be speedily rebuilt. Property owners are already planning with architects, and in three instances carpenters began work to-day on temporary structures.

## RUSSIANS DRIVEN BACK.

**Japanese Gain Another Victory—It is Said that Kuropatkin Had to Retreat on Account of Flanking Operation.**

Washington, Feb. 28.—The following cable message was received at the Japanese legation to-day:

"Our detachment attacked the enemy at Chinghocheng, thirty miles east of Pensi Ho. Strong snow storm, steep nature of ground and melting ice of Tatgu Ho greatly hindered our movements, but by noon our first line managed to press closely the enemy's position and delivered fierce attack. Enemy, consisting of sixteen battalions with twenty guns and holding strong positions with several rows of defensive works, offered stout resistance. At day-break we renewed attack, followed by grenade fighting, and at evening Chinghocheng fell into our hands. Enemy routed northward, burning Chinghocheng and leaving on field 150 dead. We captured three machine guns and a number of rifles and ammunition. Enemy's loss believed considerable. No case of frost bites in our army."

Mukden, Feb. 28.—The Russians report that the Japanese are in possession of Ta pass, which is about fifty miles southeast of Mukden, and also of the pass situated between the Ta and Kaotu passes.

Tokio, Feb. 28.—The Asahi's correspondent at the front telegraphs that a portion of General Kuroki's army, February 23rd, attacked the Russian positions in the vicinity of Tsinhocheng and Siatientse, about thirty miles north of Saimatse. After a sharp fight the Japanese about noon occupied the positions the Russians held, the Russians retreating to the northward. About 17,000 men were engaged on each side. Russians lost 2,000 in killed and wounded. The Japanese losses were trifling.

Paris, Feb. 28.—A dispatch to the Petit Parisien from St. Petersburg says that the Japanese have captured the Yangti and Xantia passes at the point of the bayonet. The Petit Journal gets news from St. Petersburg that 40,000 Japanese are threatening the rear of General Kuropatkin's army between Mukden and Tieling.

Rome, Feb. 28.—The Japanese legation here has received a dispatch from Tokio denying the violation of neutrality charged by Russia in a semi-official note to the Powers, to the effect that the Japanese traversed Mongolian territory to gain the rear of the Russian right wing on the Chinese eastern railway. The Tokio authorities assert that General Kuropatkin has been informed that what he calls a Japanese movement against the Russian right wing was one carried out by Chinese, but he refuses to believe this.

### A Great Battle Raging.

London, March 1.—A dispatch to the Telegraph from Yokohama, dated February 27th, says that a great battle is raging on the Sha River. The Japanese forward movement has begun and they are pressing General Kuropatkin's left flank. It is reported that Chunchuses have cut the line north of Mukden, tearing up miles of track and destroying a bridge. Thawing weather prevails. Under date of February 28th, the corre-

spondent says that the Japanese advance is proceeding. The Russian right has been strengthened.

### Japanese Fighting Qualities Shown.

London, Feb. 28.—The sequel to the Japanese victory at Tsinkheichen is obscure. If the reports from Mukden telling of the Japanese occupation of Ta pass and an unnamed pass is accurate the Japanese right wing seems to have since overcome the main obstacle on its route to Furlun and the upper Hun River valley. Nothing of this has been received from either side of the reported great attack on the Russian right. A correspondent with General Kuroki's army states that the Russians at Tsinkheichen were commanded by General Kennenkampf. His force consisted of a division and a half of calvary, a division of infantry, a detachment of sharpshooters and a full complement of artillery. It is estimated that the total force numbered 17,000. It is stated that the Russian casualties were 2,000.

The Japanese again displayed splendid attacking ability. They were not daunted by the heavy snow and the drenching they received in their passage of the water-covered ice in the Taitse River. Their hill fighting capacities also outmatched those of the Russian cavalry. There was much fighting at close quarters, both sides using hand grenades. The Russian position was very strong. Their trenches were protected by barbed wire and other obstructions. The Russians made a brave defense, but the Japanese flank march to the northeastward made it impossible for them to prolong their stand.

At the end of the battle the conquerors held strong lines to the southwest and northeast, menacing the main position of the Russian left. It is expected that the next fortnight will see big operations in anticipation of a general thaw.

Each day is like a furrow lying before us; our thoughts, desires, and actions are the seed that each minute we drop into it, without seeming to perceive it. The furrow finished, we commence upon another, then another, and again another; each day presents a fresh one, and so on to the end of life. . . . sowing, ever sowing. And all we have sown springs up, grows and bears fruit, almost unknown to us; even if by chance we cast a backward glance we fail to recognize our work.—Selected.

The gossiping habit is bad enough in women; it is vastly worse in men. What shall we say of it in a Christian minister? He, of all others, is bound by every consideration to avoid it. A thousand things come to his knowledge that he ought never to repeat. Many people talk to him with a sort of thoughtless freedom about their neighbors, trusting to his discretion to keep silent. It may not be right for him to listen to their tales; it certainly is not right, after he has listened, to become a repeater of all this small tittle-tattle.—Exchange.

Cherish ideals as the traveler cherishes the north star, and keep the guiding light pure and bright and high above the horizon.—Newell Dwight Hillis.