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## BILKINS' LETTER.

**Bob and Bilkins Are Getting Better, but Are Unable to do Much at Present—They Will Recreate and Prepare for That Trip Around the World—Betsy Learning Fast at the Business College—Can Now Take Fifty Words a Minute in Short Hand—Will Report for the Bilkinsville Bladder.**

Correspondence of the Enterprise.

Bilkinsville, N. C., Jan. 23.

Since my last letter me an' Bob hev bin impruvin' sumwhat, but am still unabul to do much in the way of trottin' erround' the world. Bob is tu week ter try ter swim the Atlantic Oshun, fur he can hardly swim Krab Crick or Nuse Rivver. But he can ete grass an' drink Wallnut Crick water. The other day Bob got out ov hiz stawl an' when found waz in Capitul Square tryin' ter git into the Capitul building ter see if the Legislatur were passin' any law ter prevent crewelty ter animals. He wuz tole sutch a bill would pass an' went home satisfide.

Since the late earthquake at Kingston Bob an' me will giv that place the go-bye in our trip erround the world.

Betsy iz awl attenshun these days in her studies. She iz learnin' short hand so fast she takes down 50 wurdz a minit, and can make a tipe-riter ring az fast az the dispensary cash register on Saturday afternoons when the rush hours begin. Az soon az Betsy graduates she will report the Legislatur proceedings fur the Bilkinsville Bladder, which paper haz jest bin started. No speech that haz more than 500 wurdz will be allowed in its collums, an' awl cuts ov members will be charged az rule an' figger work—dubble price—the members ter furnish the cut.

Me an' Bob air now takin' things easy an' rekreatin' so az ter be in fine condition ter start erround the world when we git in gude health agin.

Yours az ever,

ZEKE BILKINS.

## The Red Squirrel.

Outside of my study window there is placed every winter a large wooden tray filled with canary seed, bread crumbs, shredded suet, and cracked nuts, and many hungry birds come there to get their meals. One morning, as I looked through the window, I saw not a single bird, but a thin, red squirrel, sitting right in the middle of the tray and eating as jockeys eat at the end of a racing season. When I approached he seemed alarmed, but as I did not attempt to drive him away, he soon lost all appearance of fear, and continued to stuff himself with the best the tray afforded. I decided to let him stay as long as he would, but when I found him there the next morning I was obliged to put up another tray for the birds, in a place where the squirrel couldn't reach it. The four-footed pensioner grew bolder as the increasing rotundity of his body pressed the wrinkles out of his skin, and he kept his seat even if I opened the window. At last he became almost arrogant and scolded if I appeared at the window while he was feeding. But the laws of hospitality, though made of elastic, may be stretched but not compressed, and,

as he choose to stay all winter, he stayed.

In the spring the migrant birds came back, and among them a pair of robins, which nested in an apple tree in my garden. All went well until the young birds were hatched, when one day I heard the angry voices of the parent birds, and I looked out to see what the trouble was. The mother robin was seated on a low branch, and with lowered wings and tail was screaming loudly at some object below her, apparently on the trunk of the tree. Presently she darted down, with her crest raised and her bill open and ready for business, and then I caught sight of the rascally red squirrel, who scurried around the trunk to avoid her. Round and round she chased him, until he seemed to lose his presence of mind and leaped to the ground. He started across the grass at full speed, but she was after him like a fury, and he squeaked in abject terror as he fled across the road and into the woods, where the bird gave up the chase and returned, ruffled, but triumphant.

Had he profited by this experience, the red squirrel might have been living to-day, but one morning he wandered into the garden of a neighbor who was studying a pair of nesting redstarts. The squirrel found the nest, too, and a moment afterwards he was seated near it with one of the eggs in his paws. But he never finished that egg, for my neighbor has a gun and he values redstarts higher than red squirrels.—Ernest Harold Baynes, in the New York Post.

## An American Girl at Court.

The necessary wardrobe is no small matter. A simple court dress by Paquin will cost anything from \$500 to \$750—not including lace, which may be a family heirloom above price. The debutante's bouquet may include \$100 worth of costly orchids and hot-house blooms. As to gloves, the regulation twenty-four button court gloves will cost \$5 or \$10 a pair at least, in a Bond Street store; and for shoes, the correct ones are to be bought at a little store high up Bond Street, near the Oxford Street end. These people make shoes for the queen and princesses, and the price is \$25 a pair. It is embarrassing to find that almost every detail of one's attire is laid down by law and has endured for centuries.

Some points about the presentation at court are much changed since Queen Victoria's day. The "courts," as they are now called, are held at 10 o'clock at night—an hour much more becoming to one's costume and complexion than the erstwhile afternoon session. Also, there are beautiful bands in attendance; a most excellent buffet supper; and last, but by no means least, the king and queen sit on gorgeous thrones at the end of a huge and sumptuous saloon, in all the glory of ermine and purple and jewels beyond price.—Harper's Bazar.

A life without a purpose is a languid, drifting thing; every day we ought to renew our purpose, saying to ourselves: This day let us make a sound beginning, for what we have hitherto done is naught.—Thomas A. Kempis.

## Popular Errors Concerning Volcanos.

The eruption of a volcano is an occasion for the reiteration of fundamental errors concerning volcanic phenomena.

The official dispatches and the most serious reports say that the crater "vomits flame," that "black smoke" escapes from the mountain, and that "showers of cinders" are thrown out by the subterranean fires. There are as many errors as there are words in these statements. The fact is—and savants know it—that there is no combustion in volcanic phenomena; there is no eruption of fire and flame; a volcano never discharges either smoke or ashes.

Liquid lava is a non-combustible rock which melts at a high temperature. Thus heated, when red hot, lava burns combustible bodies: herbs, grass, wood—even men and animals, if it come in contact with them. In other words, lava burns things but it never is consumed.

This statement may raise an outcry, because every one who has seen a volcano in action has seen the fiery light from the crater. But flames never issue from the crater. What looks like fire is lurid light reflected on the clouds: the reflection of incandescent lava. Lava is often seen through the lateral fissures in the flanks of the volcanic mountains, but it seldom overflows. The false idea that lava overflows a crater, just as water escapes from an overfull pitcher, is firmly fixed in the human mind. The newspapers recently stated to the world that "a new crater had formed at the base of Vesuvius." Error! there is no new crater; the simple fact is this: Lava had found its way out of one of the fissures on the slope of the volcano. The lava was in the mountain and the fissure was there, but until recently the lava had not reached the fissure. "But the smoke!" How do we account for that? No one can deny that Etna's summit is always plumed with black smoke, even when the volcano sleeps, and did not Pliny the Younger compare the smoke of the Vesuvius to a gigantic pine cone on fire?

Well, yes; it looks like it! Appearances are against me, but "appearances" (in this case particularly) "are deceitful"—there is no smoke in a volcano, because there is no combustion in progress, and there cannot be smoke where there is no fire. What the ill-informed take for volumms of smoke is cloud formed by vapor—steam escaped from the volcano. Steam escapes from the crater, and when it enters the cold air it condenses and forms minute drops which mass and look like clouds of smoke.—Harper's Weekly.

## Vegetable Soups.

Nearly every vegetable grown may be employed in the preparation of soups, either as the foundation of the soup or as a garnish to any kind of meat stock. A few types of vegetable soups are given. Meat, meat broth or beef extract may be added to any of them if additional flavor is desired, but as they stand they are very satisfactory soups.

Mixed Soup.—Three quarts of water, one quart of shredded cabbage, one pint of sliced potato, half a pint of minced carrot, half a pint of minced turnip, half a pint of minced

onion, one leek, two tomatoes, two tablespoonfuls of minced celery, two tablespoonfuls of butter or drippings, three teaspoonfuls of salt and half a teaspoonful of pepper. Have the water boiling hard in a stewpan, and add all the vegetables except the potatoes and tomatoes. Boil rapidly for ten minutes, then draw back where it will boil gently for one hour. At the end of this time add the other ingredients and cook one hour longer. Have the cover partially off the stewpan during the entire cooking. This soup may be varied by using various kinds of vegetables.

## Helpfulness.

Philips Brooks, speaking of those lives from which we derive the most real courage and helpfulness, said: "It is the lives like the stars, which simply pour down on us the calm light of their bright and faithful being, up to which we gather the deepest calm and courage. No man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, pure and good without the world being better for it; without somebody being helped and comforted by the very existence of that goodness."

## How Shall We Entertain?

How shall we entertain? Joyously! Pleasure is contagious. Remember, hostess, every house has its climate; some are in the torrid, some in the temperate, some in the frigid zone. Remember, moreover, that you create the climate of your house. More important than the style of your dress, the ordering of your banquet, the setting of your table, is the mood in which the appointed hour of entertainment finds you. When the door-bell peals to the ring of the first arrival, put aside all thoughts of how you look, how your drawing-room looks, how good, bad, or indifferent the dinner may prove; banish every care, meet your guest with nothing on your mind save the anticipation of passing and helping him to pass a delightful hour. If you can do this the battle is already half won.—Maud Howe, in Harper's Bazar.

## A Wife and a Cow.

The illustrious General R. E. Lee, in his advice to his children, said to his boys: "If you want to be missed in society, be useful; patch up the old house and keep out of debt; marry a sweet woman. Let her bring a cow and a churn; they will be all you want in starting a happy, useful life. Read, improve the mind; read history, works of truth, but never read novels. Follow simplicity of dress; it is not becoming in a Virginia girl to be fashionable. A farmer's life is one of labor, but it is also one of pleasure."

The young man who predicates his acts and life on the grand principles above marked out by General Lee will be a success in this world.—Southern Agriculturalist.

I have lived to know that the great secret of human happiness is this: Never suffer your energies to stagnate. The old adage, "Too many irons in the fire," conveys an abominable falsehood. You cannot have too many. Poker, tongs, and all—keep them all going.—Dr. Adam Clarke.