

MISS PENELOPE, OMAHA

My Dear Eleanor: At an early hour last night the home of Miss Marguerite Pritchett was ablaze in honor of the young lady's birthday fete and in readiness for the celebration to which she had invited her young friends the week before. The youthful party goes evidently took a leaf from the book of their elders, for, although the cards read from 7 to 11, it was after half past before the carriages began to roll up to the front entrance and deposit their perfumed lace and silk draped occupants. At 8 o'clock the party was in full swing, the music pulsed through the open doors and windows and lured many passers-by to stop and gaze, smile in sympathy and pass on. The house was alive with color, the upturned faces of roses everywhere were scarcely so beautiful as the human faces bright with the joy of the occasion.

It was very amusing to watch the coming men in miniature bowing with great grace before some belles of the future and requesting the pleasure of the dance. I overheard one gentleman of tender years say to a dainty looking maiden, "Will you dance this with me; can you dance?" She gave a coquetish toss to her ringleted head and replied: "Thank you, I don't suppose I can dance it so extra fine, but I will try." The table was as attractive as quantities of pink roses, smilax, maiden hair fern and dainties of every description could make it.

Shortly before 11 the tired, happy little revellers began to disperse and no doubt finished the remainder of the night dancing through dreamland, discounting the joys of the future.

The young hostess looked charming in a pink gauze gown, while Phoebe Imette and Margaret Wood were equally attractive in rose tinted silk with all the accessories of a ball costume, fan, long gloves and flowers. Pretty Natalie Merriam's costume was also noticeable, a green gauze, burnished with narrow ribbon. Marion Hughes in white and blue and Frances Riley in a tinted organdie, trimmed with white ribbons, were particularly dainty, but amid so much beauty I should not attempt to discriminate. Here are some of the guests: The Misses Cotton, Morseman, Thurston, Coffman, Kirkendall, Congdon, Drake, McConnell, Bradford, McShane, Allen, with Messrs. Roy Wood, Dougherty, Thurston, Sheverick, Burns, Lyman, Yates and many others whose names we did not learn.

This was not the only birthday celebrated among us last night. Another year had added its feather weight to our most gracious lady, Mrs. Nelson Patrick. Her family planned a surprise celebration, which surely was adroitly managed, for she was persuaded to go down to Lincoln for a few days to visit Mrs. Lambertson. It is safe to suppose no inkling of the real facts ever occurred to her and the arch conspirators were thus afforded a clear field for action, which they well improved, as the sequel showed. Tuesday Mrs. Patrick was telegraphed for to come to the house of a friend, which she did, and later was telephoned for to come home at once, that some friends had unexpectedly arrived. So the unsuspecting victim of this complicated plot once more complied and went home, when the whole fabrication became known to her. The surprise was absolutely complete. A beautiful dinner to which ninety-six of her friends and old time acquaintances had been summoned was served from flower laden tables. The large table stood in the dining room, while a smaller one was set in the breakfast room and was presided over by Mrs. Manderson and Mrs. Robert Patrick. If you know Mrs. Patrick, Eleanor, you know a fair and gracious woman, on whom even the years have laid loving hands, so fair and sweet she is. Happy Hollow has ever been deservedly noted for its entertainments and this one, under the direct supervision of Mr. Patrick, was no exception, and as mine host he fairly scintillates. Among the diners were: Mr. and Mrs. Cowin, Judge and Mrs. Doane, Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Yates, Mrs. and Mrs. C. E. Yost, General and Mrs. Manderson, the Misses Yates, Miss Black of Chicago and Messrs. Robert and John Patrick.

A few members of the swell set gave a concert last evening at the Congregational church for the benefit of the Emma Flower mission. It was well attended and very enjoyable. Miss Helen Hoagland sang for the first time in public and made a very favorable impression. One of the most appreciated numbers was Mrs. Dickey's recitation, "The Organ Builder," with organ accompaniment.

Bishop and Mrs. Worthington gave a reception for the visiting clergymen at Brownell hall last night.

We had all kinds of dissipation made possible last evening. You pays your

money and takes your choice. Speaking about paying your money, Dr. Lee has flashed some rather pronounced negligee shirts on his circle this spring. One of them a black and white, very stylish, but a trifle extreme as to the width of the stripe. This one, I repeat, threw one of his friends in a trance on coming in view of it suddenly. Upon his awakening he asked weakly, "Doc, where did you get that shirt, at Browning & King's or the Tent and Awning company's?" I am not encouraging such familiarity. I think it ought to be suppressed.

The Woman's club expects Francis Walker Friday. You know he sings beautifully and goes about the country to introduce the Derthick course of music. It is a literary music course, or more properly a course in the literature of music, and is especially adapted to people who do not know a thing about music. That's the reason I mention it. I thought you might like to join.

Yesterday I saw a tiny maiden sitting on a curb stone and blowing the down off dandelion balls and then chasing the elusive bits in the vain endeavor to recapture them. She set me to thinking. I sat down beside her and said seriously, "My dear child, you cannot get those little white stars again." "But I want to pit 'em back some more" "You cannot, dear, and when you grow to be a big lady you will find that the beautiful things you throw away you can never find again. You had a little brother once and he cried night and day for the moon. The people who took care of him grew tired and set a bucket of water in the yard. The little boy looked in it and thought the moon had come down to him. He reached down eagerly. When he stood up again there was no curl in his hair, no starch in his

sailor collar and he caught a bad cold. He may have wanted the moon after that, but he never cried for it." The little maiden gave me a curious unflinching stare out of her blue eyes. I wonder if there is anything which renders one more sensible of defects than the level uncompromising gaze of a child? This one rose, sedately trotted across the lawn, and plucked other dandelions that she might blow more joy abroad; however, it is for the grown up blower of dandelions that my sympathy is keenest, for I am one of them. If you cannot be the rich man, methinks it would be better to be numbered among the beggars at the gate. Poverty acknowledged loses half of its sting. Papa told me emphatically last night he couldn't afford to let me have a trip this summer. Life threatens to prove a failure. Mama told me, early, that I couldn't have many new clothes, but I didn't care very much, because I had several pretty gowns left over from last season. I wonder if there is anything more hopelessly and provokingly disappointing than last summer clothes. You lay away a lawn or organdie and it lingers in your memory as a peculiarly tasty confection, very becoming to you; you did not wear it much; it will be as good as new. You take it out next year. Heavens! what ails it? It has a small sleeve, generally contracted air about it, positively dowdy, it is stamped from the hem to the neck ruffle with a last year's bird's nest expression which is maddening. Of course, life has its compensations. Ever so many people expect to take their summer vacation in or near Omaha. Mr. Ed. Peck and family leave this week for their pretty farm house at Calhoun. I hear the Lewis Reeds talk of taking the Poppleton place at Elkhorn. Mr. and Mrs. Will Wyman have found a town house to suit them and will not go to Florence as usual this summer. Okiboji will have many of the accustomed sojourners, the Curtises, the Baums, the Wilhelms and most likely the D. C. Patterson family, who are at present in Manitou.

If I should happen to go any place I refer you to the Excelsior for my address. The only way I can get in is as a contributor to that too sweet for anything weakly, is to subscribe my name to an out of town address. Yours to the bitter end,
PENELOPE.
Omaha, May 20, 1896.

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