

OMAHA LETTER.

Omaha, Nebr.,
May 3, 1901.

Dear Eleanor:

I am looking through the most beautiful green lace veil imaginable. Nature, like maidens, coquettes with a more vital spark in the spring tide. The hundreds of young elm leaves are still quivering from the last ardent glance of that shameless old flirt—the sun. The birds, deceived by the long shadows thrown by the hills back of us, are having a world of gossipy last things to say—before settling down and leaving the world “to darkness and to me.” I am again experiencing that delightful task you so frequently make possible for me, of answering my last letter to you. When I complained about it in the hearing of the family, mother said with that exasperating frankness relatives employ toward each other: “Eleanor is not at all like you, Penelope; she probably waits until she has something to say.” Sometimes I think mother is rather a pretty woman; but some of her expressions lead me to believe the family beauty has been inherited from paw's side.

As Billy Baxter would have said: “I got next to a very funny little episode a few days since.” If a melodrama were to be constructed from the materials at hand, the hero would have to be personated by quite a swell young beau of this city. But the tearful, really pitiful heroine must remain an unknown quantity. The business house with which this young man is connected, places great confidence in him and frequently sends him out over this and adjoining states on business requiring just the agreeable attractions this young man possesses. During two or three years of this sort of life, naturally he has come in contact with many people and made friends more or less. One town in particular, where the young man was an especially desirable customer, Romeo—for short—was unusually free with his gifts of grace. He was a welcome guest in the family. The children approved of him—he had bought their affections in the usual way, with striped candy and peppermints. The wife didn't object to him, or at least didn't say so. The last time he made the town, he went at once to the store, was warmly greeted and after a few minutes conversation, the man said heartily, “Guess we'd better hike up to the house and see Jen.” When the house was reached, the chatty host flung open the door with a stentorian call of “Jen,” but no response. “Come right along in, G—; she's here somewhere.” A second door and second call of “Jen” stirred a limp bundle, which was evidently dozing on the lounge. “Come along here, maw, and see if you know who this here is.” The bundle was dragged up to the semblance of a limp woman. Then she came forward with a quickly extended hand—“Gee! if it isn't G—” Romeo's knees shook in panic. For the light in Juliet's eyes is as unmistakable on the sweep of the prairie as from a vine-hung balcony. Romeo cut his visit short as possible and made haste to find himself under the safe brooding wing of Omaha.

Oh! but it isn't all the foregoing that is so funny, Eleanor. Romeo hadn't been home a week when he came up to see me one evening under the influence of a letter he had received. The letter was probably as ingenious a composition as ever struck mortal terror to the heart of man, although I have not seen it yet. Romeo was so panic stricken that he gave me a very garbled account of his evident trouble; but I made out that “Jen” had fallen a helpless victim to that airy personification of his, which had been so harmless to the polished Omaha belles, on whom he had hitherto practiced.

“But that isn't the worst of it,”

groaned this unlucky son of Apollo. “She's going to bolt. Throw up the domestic sponge with an indifference which would make Zaza's head spin.”

“Going to bolt,” I gasped; “where is she going to bolt?”

“Where? where do you suppose; but to the protection of this destroyer of her peace?—she's coming down here.”

“Good gracious!” I exclaimed, too suddenly jarred from my moorings to be elegant; “does she really say so in that letter? Does she make any complaint of Jabe?”—I had become familiar with the family names.

“Nothing specific! Just general ennui—and a desire for city life.”

I leaned against a pillar of the porch and laughed hopelessly. “It's all your fatal fascinations, Romeo.”

“Oh, d— my fascinations. Excuse me, Penelope.”

This part of it is verbatim, and that is what he said in the deepest abasement.

“Are you sure, Romeo, there never was anything in your manner to lead—”

“For goodness sake! don't say it. If you could see that pale effigy of what a woman should be, you would absolve me from that suspicion. I give you my word I didn't see her unless Jabe was there, and I didn't want to.”

“Why didn't you bring the letter and show it to me?” I asked with a hint of suspicion.

“Oh, you shall see it! I left it at the office. Didn't want the folks at the house to see it. What in the name of goodness shall I do?”

“Don't worry so, Romeo,” I counselled, somewhat softened by his genuine concern. “I do not believe she will ever come.”

“She will! I can see a messenger boy showing her into the office this minute. What will the governor say?”

I could scarcely recognize in the limp, nervous young man before me the ordinarily spruce Romeo of former evenings.

“It does seem a maw, poor boy; but although I can't help regarding it as a sort of farce, you seem to have constructed a very unpleasant bogie man of it. Do you want my advice?”

“It isn't worth shucks as a rule,” he ungallantly responded, “but I am pretty low—give it to us.”

I nobly forebore resentment. “Well, I would pack that letter back to Jabe—you'll really do her a great service, and say you are going away; but if his wife would care for a couple of days of sight-seeing in the city you have a friend who will take care of her for two or three days—and you can send her to me, Romeo. What are friends good for if not to use, and I owe it to you, Romeo, for always successfully resisting your charms which have reduced so many other women to pulp.”

Romeo sprang to his feet, renewed, and in his right mind. “Superb advice, Penelope—but do you mean it—could you do it?”

“Cheerfully—if she should elect to come—it would be a lark for me; but I never will believe in her reality until she actually appears on my horizon.”

“But you are a brick, Pen. How can I ever repay you?”

“By never misunderstanding me. Must you go?”

“Yes, I have an engagement at the C.'s. I didn't feel up to it before. But you have cleared the way and I breathe again. I'll let you know if I hear anything.”

“Perhaps you had better if I am to have a guest. Good-night.”

That was two or three days ago and I have not seen anything of Romeo. Incidentally I hear he is out of town. Adam's sons must tread the way of their father. Countless Eves still essay excursions into forbidden fields—and take the sentence of the court as Adams still prove alibis.

The noisy little birds are quiet. The

elm leaves, because they are so young, believe themselves forgotten and hang motionless. The moon wades daintily through light clouds. The boys at the corner have given over marbles and tops, for several mothers have noisily called their brood to shelter.

I am going to kiss that baby Rob good-night—*asleep*, he is such a picture of rosy cherubic loveliness—that I wonder if angels do not oftener sleep.

And then my heart to you,

PENELOPE.

The Annual Meeting of the German Baptist Brethren will be held in Lincoln, Nebraska, from May Twenty Four to May Thirty-One, Nineteen Hundred and One.

For this meeting a special rate of one fare for the round trip will be made from Chicago, Peoria, St. Louis and all stations on the Burlington Route. The roads east of Chicago and St. Louis are also expected to make a very low rate for the Brethren, and sell through tickets to Lincoln and return.

Tickets will be on sale May 23 to May 27, inclusive, and they will be limited for return to June 4.

The charge, therefore, for a round trip ticket to Lincoln and return for the Brethren Meeting will be: From Chicago, \$14.40; from Peoria, \$12.90; from St. Louis \$12.55

Brethren who wish to stay longer in Nebraska, can have the limit on their tickets extended by depositing them with the railroad “joint agent” at Lincoln who will issue a *certificate of deposit* on or before June 3, and charge a fee of fifty cents for it. Tickets will then be good for return at any time until June 30, 1901.

Many of the Brethren will probably want to visit some of the numerous German Baptist settlements in Nebraska before returning home. Any one who presents a certificate of deposit to the Burlington Route agent at Lincoln will be able to get a round-trip ticket to any place on our line in Nebraska for half fare. These tickets will be sold on May 28 to June 3, inclusive, and will be good for return to Lincoln until June 25.

We publish a folder about the German Baptist Brethren in Nebraska. In it is a very large sectional map of the state, with reference marks which indicate where the Brethren settlements are located. It tells about the crops and prospects, and contains letters from

resident Brethren, giving their experiences in Nebraska. A copy of this will be sent without charge if you will ask P. S. Eustis, General Passenger Agent, C., B. & Q. R. R., Chicago, Illinois.

THEATRICALS.

THE OLIVER.

Neil Burgess' graphic delineations of the New England spinster “Abigail Prue” have set many a theatre in roars of laughter at their many little eccentricities of character, sharp, conspicuous and true to life. In the “County Fair,” which is this season being revived on a most elaborate scale, with Neil Burgess himself as the coy maiden, who gets rather old waiting for the proposal, but always fondly hoping, at last wins a home by winning a home race. Miss Abigail Prue has a lovely character companion in “Tagge,” who is as distinctively and willingly demonstrative a young lass as Abigail Prue is an unwillingly willing, but pronounced old lass. Between the two they make things hum. Mr. Burgess has so great a fund of animation and energy, that he positively infects the audience with his irresistible gush and notion clatter, when he lets loose the bottled pent up fancies of practical Miss Prue. The stage devices are very ingenious, the scenery and properties elaborate and everything else this season in connection with the “County Fair” is on a scale of grandeur never before witnessed, adding vividness to the general picture.

At the Oliver Theatre, Thursday, May 16th. Seat sale opens Tuesday, nine A. M. Regular prices.

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