

## LINCOLN LETTER.

Lincoln, Nebr.,  
June 26, 1901.

Dear Penelope:

Wednesday and no letter from you. A young lady of elegant leisure, like yourself, is not going to crowd herself to compose letters to a friend who is not in her class anyway and can not get up an answer fit to be printed on the same page with hers. Especially in this warm weather a literary dilettante shrinks from getting too near the fires of genius which sometimes scorches me, Penelope, when I open your hot stuff. If you were a young lady, Penelope, who had to earn your own living, you would compose for it; not music, but stories. It's you that has the quick wrist and that knows how to turn the sentence into a great joke. But, dearest, if you depended on your pen it would be a long time before you could afford strawberries with your porridge. I suppose you do nothing more laborious these days than sip sorbets and soda ice-cream drinks. If you only had a house and a husband to look after you would learn what care and anxiety are.

Jack has been playing golf lately. I do not play because I am so thin and he says the work will make me thinner. It has just occurred to me that Jack is unusually positive that golf will hurt me. I wonder who there is, out there, that Jack is so interested in.

The last June wedding between a sterling young business man and one of Lincoln's fairest daughters has been celebrated and there are so many sterling young men and so many triple-plated, so many fairest daughters wearing veils and standing under floral bells, so many "officiating clergymen", and all that, the last fortnight; that the human mind tires of the monotony of repetition. It will be a year or two, probably, before the eastern style, or absence of it, reaches Lincoln; but most of the millionaire heiresses who have married this June have ordered the ceremony with absolute simplicity. There have seldom been more than thirty present. Those were intimate friends and close relatives of the groom and bride. The thousand and one intimate friends of a rich girl were not invited. And the bride withdrew before the wedding to the country home of the family and when the hour struck, walked (Think of it, Lincoln brides!), walked through the village streets to the plain little church, where the pastor in the same coat or gown he preaches in, married them. The bridal parties were not smothered with flowers, and the little churches were only fragrant with garden and field flowers. The oppressive ceremony which still characterizes the weddings of the west is doomed.

After a while in Lincoln the bride will pace into the church followed by a little procession of relatives and friends. She will not collect a trousseau of such variety and number that long before her things are worn out they will be out of date. It is no compliment to the groom's ability to take care of his wife for the father of the bride to buy her dresses and lingerie enough to last her a decade. Besides, it is very bad for a young husband to lead him to think that you do not need even a dress a year. Moreover the ordinary father can not afford to spend a year's income on his daughter's trousseau, especially if he have other daughters.

Do you not think yourself that there is too much fuss and feathers, too many little girls holding a calla lily upon which is impaled the Ring, too many bridesmaids and too much trepidant expectation and suspense? Anyway it's this way where I live at, down in Lincoln. Then the howling mob that follows the unhappy and scared bride and groom to the station. If it is at night the strangers who occupy the berths are scarcely

amused by someone else's joke. They ask the name of the place and ever afterwards hold a grudge against Lincoln, and believe that the place is full of fools who accompany their friends, that are only going as far as Chicago, to the station and bawl silly bleats into the air and the ears of total strangers. If there were anything new about the performance it would be funnier, but each new wedding party is like a flock of sheep bleating in ecstasy over their out-worn methods of appraising strangers that a newly-wedded pair is getting on board.

June is nearly over and so many weddings at once will not occur again for a year. Jack says I ought to keep still about other people's affairs, and that's so. A much greater nuisance than June weddings, their fuss and feathers, and the crowd of silly friends that make wedding days hideous are the officious people like myself, who criticize things that make the weather warmer but do not mitigate the nuisance. Speaking of officious people, have you any friends who pick at your dress and tie every time they see you? Would you not go around a block in the sun to avoid an interview with these well-meaning but officious people? Women who never get their shirt waists and dress skirts justified irritate the eye and the sense of propriety, but the very absence of mind which causes them to overlook the proper precautions in regard to their own waist and skirt operates to make them oblivious of their neighbor's shortcomings. This is a rather ill-natured letter, Penelope, but I have suffered from these officious friends rather more than the ordinary woman because my Lincoln friends seem to think I have no sense at all. These friends stop to regulate my attire (more in summer than in winter because the former is the open season for shirt waists, but I could endure it with more equanimity in winter on account of the temper being shorter in summer,) not for any consuming desire to improve my appearance, but because my skirt or waist or neck is not arranged just to suit them. And seems to me all my friends, especially, are set upon having their own way, and of course my toilette is never satisfactory to them. The only thing that makes me more and more sardonic and skeptical of their true philanthropy is that after one glass of fashion has laid hands on my person, the next G. O. F. I meet, is likely to rearrange my costume into the graceful lines of my own original draping. You are so assured, you have the manner of la grande dame, you are occasionally even supercilious, so I suppose you are not subjected to assault and battery several times a day.

It is queer to Americans, isn't it, the spectacle of the King of England auctioning off the wines laid down in 1869 and 1879 in Buckingham palace and in St. James palace? The bottles are blown with the royal arms and it is suggested that after the wine that was made for royal throats has been poured down democratic gullets whose owners profess to despise emperors and every thing pertaining to them, the bottles with the royal arms of England blown into their rotund bodies will still be worth a small fortune to the owners, so wild are even the most vociferous democrats to possess something made for a real king. It does not seem quite dignified for King Edward to auction off his wine cellar that was the good Queen Victoria's. Fancy President McKinley selling wine to raise money to pay off his debts. King Edward is getting an extra price because he is king. To exploit or trade on so high a position as king is unworthy the position. Think of the W. C. T. U. and their throat and lung capacity, if the President should turn saloon-keeper. Not even McKinley could have been elected the second

time if in his first term he had employed an auctioneer to sell off some wine in bottles wherein the arms of the United States were blown. Americans as individuals are doubtless no better than Englishmen but the arms of the United States were never blown into a wine bottle. The impossibility of such a sale in America shows how far we have come. In Washington's day no one would have been shocked to discover that wine bottles were manufactured and stamped with the arms of the United States.

At the sale in New York the other day Croker, who is an Irishman and claims to be a democrat, bought forty-one dozen bottles of pale, golden sherry from Edward, King of England.

Speaker Henderson, the speaker of what is supposed to be the most democratic body in the world, was granted an interview with King Edward recently. The man who stands for the proletariat said:

"I have never enjoyed a more agreeable half hour interview than the one I had with King Edward yesterday. He was perfectly frank and agreeable and in accord with American progress. He looks forward to even more cordial relations than now exist between the English-speaking nations. America may depend upon the fact that she has no more cordial friend in the world than King Edward. While the details of our conversation may not be repeated, I can assure my American friends that England may be depended on in any ordinary controversy which may arise between the United States and the rest of the world."

I am writing this in rather a scornful mood because it is easy to see from Speaker Henderson's account that he is exultant because King Edward has noticed him and has assured him of his good feeling towards America. As yet the King has betrayed no pleasure at meeting the speaker. But his Majesty is used to meeting very important people and bore himself, during the interview, with admirable composure. It is easy enough to scoff at Henderson, way off here in Nebraska, because he lost his head when the King of England said: "How do you do," and "I am glad to see a prominent American," if that is the way kings, complaisant kings, greet American citizens. But supposing we had been thus addressed. We too would have cabled it to America and told the story o'er and o'er to our friends and repeated it again so that the glory of it would last our posterity down to the most remote generation. Here in Henderson's family is the beginning of a tradition that will feed his great grandchildren with distinction enough to satisfy them, although none of his posterity come again within the radius of the intoxicating light that bathes a king in so much dazzle that no man can come near him without losing his balance. My reflections are jaundiced because when I was in England I could not get one of the royal family to look at me though I am just as much of an American as Henderson.

This is a long letter which I doubt you will read with much patience in this hot weather.

Faithfully,  
ELEANOR.

Cora—Do you believe in palmistry?  
Merritt—No, my dear. The only time I was glad to find a life line in my hand was when I was shipwrecked.

## A UNIVERSITY GRADUATE.

[KATHARINE MELICK.]  
For The Courier.

No, I'm not going to frame it. That diploma is not what I've been working seven years to get. That and the announcement of the Lake Forest fellowship I've been working for are both of them means to an end. The end is—you.

I know you are amazed, but you must

let me tell you before I go away. Then you can think about it. Just let me state my case. You have no right to refuse an old friend a hearing. That's all I ask.

Ever since I can remember anything, I can remember you. Have you forgotten when we helped our fathers put in the little slim cottonwood cuttings that grew into a row of trees between our two farms? I've sat under those young cottonwoods herding the cattle on our corn stalks, and watching the tops of the old maple grove where you were swinging, more times than I can tell you. The day before we sold out to go to Kansas I sat there and watched Brindle and Speck and the five Shorthorns and Baron Mason with his bunch, and wondered if your father would buy any of them.

When we came back from Kansas with nothing but the covered wagon and the horses, it was some comfort to think I was going to be in my old seat in the school house, across the aisle from you. Well, you weren't there, you know. When I found that you were in Lincoln high school I first thought of going through college. Of course you didn't know it, nor of what it's been to do it. But you ought to know that I couldn't have done it without you.

Nobody knows the struggle it's been sometimes. If we could have had the old farm again it would have been different. But a square mile of Furnas county isn't worth as much, some years, as our row of cottonwoods along the old creek. I know how men go crazy out there when they watch the clouds come up, day after day, and blow away again, and so little rain would save the whole crop. You put in your work just the same, you know. And some times it doesn't count, though everything in a man's life depends on it.

That worst year—it was my junior year—I went into a doctor's office, and after a while I earned something. So I kept little Dick alive. Children can't live the way grown folks have to some times. And when you're out there, it's not so easy to get away. I've thought of walking back here to find work, but a fellow couldn't tell what might happen at home before he would strike anything.

Next year there was about a third of the alfalfa crop. I went back with just two dollars and a suit of store clothes. Many a time when I've pushed a broom in a big department store, between twelve and two at night, so that the fine skirts of fine ladies would be safe from dust for next day's special sales, I've gone to sleep as I walked. And when I thought of the next day, with a five cent loaf for breakfast and logarithms for dinner—well, it wasn't for the logarithmic roots I shoved that broom.

You never knew, and I wanted it so. It's little enough I have to tell you now, but I can't go away again without telling it. Perhaps you'll not be sorry when you think it over, that you've been a force stronger than drouth and hail and Kansas grasshoppers, and most that hunger and cold and heat can do to a man. Anyway, think it over. I'll see you tomorrow before I go.

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