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LINCOLN LETTER.

Lincoln, Nebr.,
July 26, 1901.

Dear Penelope:

Your letter was as grateful as a shower to the ancient peoples who enjoyed them. I have been reading lately about a flood they had in the days of old that wet the earth impartially all over. The modern instances only dampen Roca here and Gretna there, with perhaps a little soda-water dash of moisture at Ashland. It is hard to believe that there is more water in the world, three-fourths more, than land. Everything we can see is dry land and brassy sky, and it is hard to realize that five hundred miles away are the great lakes and fifteen hundred miles away on each side is a salt ocean cool as snow and deep as a mountain. I made a resolution, before beginning this letter to you, that I would not talk about the weather, but about the Arctic expedition soon to be undertaken by the Duke of Abruzzi to the north pole. But these are the days of realism and I know so much more about the effect on the minds, manners and dispositions of Nebraska people than I know about freezing to death in the Arctic regions. They do say it is easy to keep cool there and they have not had a heated spell for a long time. No wonder the Duke wants to go there again. If the north pole region were as hot as it is cold I do not believe it would be sown so thickly with the bones of heroes. Hot weather takes the heroics and all desire for the amelioration of the race, all devotion to science out of one more quickly than cold applications, don't you think? But in spite of the heat and dry weather the corn looks green and self-possessed. Where it gets the chlorophyl for its complexion is more than I know. It may hold up the weather man, only he seems just as green as ever. If I were an altruist I should be talking to you about cooling salads, instead of sending you this roast on the weather man. But this heat affects like a severe stomach-ache: I can not think or talk of anything else, while it lasts.

A friend of mine has been visiting Kansas, her affections, not her liking for hot weather, drew her thither. She intended to stay for two months. She stayed about three weeks. Her daughter, who was her hostess, lives in a small town whose market is supplied by the immediately contiguous farmers. The drought has burnt up the fruit and vegetables, so that my friend had to subsist entirely on meat and canned things. The diet, the treeless, grassless plains, the terrible sun who has his own unmitigated way with the people of Kansas, weighed in the balance against affection, held even for three weeks. But the day came when endurance was exhausted and she fled back to Lincoln as to a refuge. Anything hotter than Lincoln these days is inconceivable, except to a Lincoln visitor to Kansas.

My morning visit to the grocer is a discouraging expedition. The tomatoes are measly little shriveled things, the cauliflowers have not blossomed and are tough as leather. Peas, beans and other vegetables are of poor quality and flavor, and are very dear. Jack, of course, does not appreciate my marketing difficulties, so he thinks I am neglecting his table, which in our house occupies the place which a shrine does in some families and when I look across the table and observe that martyred ex-

pression on Jack's face I know that all the effects of the drought are being laid to bad and careless housekeeping. Jack thinks he is too much of a gentleman to say anything about his feelings then. But I hear about them sooner or later in one way or another. I sometimes look with envy, Penelope, upon your unchained, irresponsible existence. To be sure, you have an exigent mother, but a mother is a woman and sometimes neglects to revenge herself on injuries received from her offspring. A husband never forgets and hardly forgives enough to ignore an opportunity of reprisal.

We are having concerts, every Tuesday and Friday evening, on capitol square. The Hagenow band is a very good one and about 1000 people gather to listen to the music. Or rather about 800 come to listen to the music and dispose themselves in quiet groups on the grass. Their purpose is partially defeated by two hundred ruffianly boys, who set off some explosive, whistle and who wrestle with each other among the patient groups whose purpose they entirely frustrate. If the patrol wagon could be kept near the grounds during these concerts and the unruly few, who destroy the pleasure of the many, arrested, the time would soon come when we should present as cultivated an appearance while listening to music as Mexicans or Germans. The boys with whose inveterate diabolism no one interferes do not come to listen to the music, for they never listen to it. They come to create a disturbance and make other people unhappy. Ours is the only country on earth where a few brutes are suffered to destroy the purpose of a large concourse. The police stand within arm's reach of boys who are making more piercing noises than the band, and do not arrest them. We are not a musical people, and these crude, dirty, foul-smelling hoodlums who shout, whistle and swear louder than a band can play, are a proof of our barbarity. Very rarely the band plays something fine. When it does the applause is louder than after "Whistling Rufus," disproving the statement that only educated musicians like nocturnes, sonatas, etc. Do you have free, popular, hoodlum-infected concerts in Omaha?

Thursday is a day of prayer for rain. I suppose it is all right, but does it not seem queer to ask Him to change His plans and interfere with the natural causes which have caused the present conditions? But every individual, believer or agnostic, asks for help when death is imminent and human help of no avail. Every day the clouds gather and try to drop their burden on the earth, and the dry air all around them sucks it up and holds it in suspended dampness too far above us to do any good. The farmer, whose season's work is destroyed, watches the clouds with anxious trepidation ever since the dry spell began. He is praying all the time with an iteration that would tire him if it were audible. These thousands of prayers from farmers and farmers' wives have been ascending for a month, without affecting the deep-seated meteorological cause. I am like poor Mr. Dick and the head of King Charles which he was unable to keep out of the conversation, try as he would. The state is in an attitude of waiting for coolness and moisture, and while we wait we can think of nothing except what we are waiting and praying for.

Wright, the rainmaker, is going to shoot off his guns next week. He is sure he can get rain. But they say he is not a rich man. It is certain that if he can make rain when he wants it he can rent or buy a farm, and a large crop in a dry year will make him very well-to-do. Then he can buy a contiguous farm and keep on adding to his territory or which he can rain in seasons of drought. A few years of this sort of thing would make him a Croesus. He

says his fortune would be made if he could only induce people to have faith in his rainmaking discovery. There is no argument necessary, if he will go to work on his own farm and raise a big crop, wet or dry. He is like the impetuous necromancers and dream-readers who advertise that they can make all applicants rich by interpreting their dreams and foretelling the price of wheat. All men are selfish. If a man has an opportunity to make a fortune, he will not sell the chance for a dollar, which is only one millionth of a fortune, will he, Penelope? Yours,

ELEANOR.

CRITICISM.

Every man stands before something which is his judge. The child stands before the father, not in a single act, making report of what he has been doing on a special day, but in the whole posture of his life, as if the father were a mirror in which he saw himself reflected, and from whose reflection of himself he gained at once a judgment as to what he was, and suggestions as to what he ought to be.

The poet stands before nature. She is his judge. A certain felt harmony or discord between his nature and her ideal is the test and directing power of his life. The philosopher stand before the unseen, majestic presence of abstract truth. The philanthropist stands before humanity. The artist stands before beauty. The legislator stands before justice. The politician stands before that vague but awful embodiment of average character, the people. The scholar stands before knowledge, and gets the satisfactions or disappointments of his life from the approvals or disapprovals of her serene and gracious lips.

The mission of the critic is a thankless one. In matters large or small, human nature resents the implication of anything less than perfection. If driven to a direct expression, each individual would say: "I realize that I am not perfect. I have many faults and imperfections, but I do not wish to be reminded of them by my friends." Yet from the criticism which is prompted by a loving spirit, much benefit may be derived. A certain distance from an object is essential to seeing it in its true proportions, thus our friends are enabled to distinguish both the faults and the excellencies which to our own minds do not exist as individual traits.

Criticism, however, is apt to degenerate into mere fault-finding, which is beneficial neither to the victim of the habit nor to the object against whom it is directed. The mission of the true critic is to build up, while that of the chronic fault-finder is to tear down and destroy.

We are none of us so free from faults that we do not need to have the best possible construction put on what we do. It is more congenial to the natural heart to convict than to acquit. Our first impulse is not to say pleasant things about people, but unpleasant ones. We find just what we set out to find, and see exactly what we want to see. And because we do not much care to see excellencies in people, the first thing we mention about them regularly is their faults.

The fault is not in men alone that their blemishes are so conspicuous, but in the jaundiced eye that puts its own bad complexion on all it beholds. A part of what we see is only the dingy shadow cast by our own spirit. Spiders do not weave their webs in a clean room, nor suspicions build their nests in a guileless heart.

Self-respect ought to mean something more than a comfortable sense that you have not been found out.—Town Topics.

LITERARY NOTES.

A Romance of the Wheat Pit.

"The End of the Deal" is the title of an unusually good business serial story which is to begin in an early number of The Saturday Evening Post, of Philadelphia. A famous transaction on the Chicago Board of Trade is the basis upon which the author, Mr. Will Payne, has founded this striking romance of the wheat pit. A charming love story runs through the stern and stirring plot.

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First Pub. July 27-4.

Notice to Creditors.—E 1546.

State of Nebraska, ss. county court, Lancaster county, in re estate of Henning Peters, deceased.

Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation of claims against said estate is February 15, 1902, and for payment of debts is Sept. 2, 1902; that I will sit at the county court room in said county, on November 15, 1901, and February 15, 1902, to receive, examine, adjust and allow all claims duly filed. Publish weekly four times in The Courier. Dated July 26, 1901.

(SEAL.)

FRANK R. WATERS,
County Judge.
By WALTER A. LEESE, Clerk.

First Pub. July 27-4.

Notice to Creditors.—E 1567.

State of Nebraska, ss. county court, Lancaster county, in re estate of Elizabeth Mitchell, deceased.

Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation of claims against said estate is Feb. 15, 1902, and for the payment of debts is Sept. 2, 1902; that I will sit at the county court room in said county, on Nov. 15, 1901, and Feb. 15, 1902, to receive, examine, adjust and allow all claims duly filed. Publish weekly four times in The Courier. Dated July 26, 1901.

(SEAL.)

FRANK R. WATERS,
County Judge.
By WALTER A. LEESE,
Clerk County Court.

First Pub. July 27-4.

Notice to Creditors.—E 1557.

State of Nebraska, ss. County court, Lancaster county, in re estate of Harriett S. Burnett, deceased.

Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation of claims against said estate is February 15, 1902, and for payment of debts is Sept. 2, 1902; that I will sit at the county court room in said county on November 15, 1901, and February 15, 1902, to receive, examine, adjust and allow all claims duly filed. Publish weekly four times in The Courier. Dated July 26, 1901.

(SEAL.)

FRANK R. WATERS,
County Judge.
By WALTER A. LEESE, Clerk.