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**OMAHA LETTER.**

Omaha, Nebr.,  
July 27, 1901.

Dear Eleanor:

Still day melts into day, like golden beads strung on threads of fire!

I have paused fully fifteen minutes to admire that figure of speech. It would take a prejudiced critic indeed who would refuse to acknowledge the superiority of the person who could accomplish it, especially when she did so under the realistic impression that the perspiration was surely ruining her last clean shirt waist, and that she hadn't another darned pair of socks in her bureau drawer—and not the slightest inclination to darn one from the very formidable bunch cruelly located where she cannot help but see it.

Mother's "Pouf" is simply untranslatable whenever I murmur anything about the responsibility of genius. To a great extent, Eleanor, you are to blame for my undeniable shiftlessness.

How is it within the compass of one weak feminine personality to put aside, to turn away—in short, to rise above the subtle flattery rolled up in your persuasive demands for my letters—your apparently uncontrollable joy at their appearance, your lachrymose reproach when they fail? It is the most insidious injection that ever spread like wine through a pulpy anatomy. It stiffens my collapsing vertebrae, it hardens my limpid digitals. It lifts me bodily from a supine position among silkoline cushions to an uncurled attitude before my desk, frantically reaching for my indelible pencil, scraps of paper, backs of envelopes, anything. In fact, I find suddenly that I have been provided with a fictitious energy—projected an incredible distance along the road necessary to provide you another shower of joy in the way of a letter. I am fully equipped in the matter of everything save ideas. You have fired your explosives, most wonderful Lincoln scientist. You have gathered the clouds. Fitful lightning flashes along my mental horizon; there is a pregnant rumbling in the distance, but alas! where are the showers your well-meant fireworks should precipitate? Precipitation! If there has been anything which has added more to my mental and physical discomfort in the last thirty-six days, than the weather, it has been the precipitation which does not precipitate. I made no promise not to talk about the weather or not to write about it. All the printing houses in the town have used up their "slug heads" on the subject, and still there is more to follow! What am I that I should hold myself above the rest of my kind? There is an immense number of people in this world whose mission, like that of excelsior, is to "fill up space." Not an ignoble part, by the way, if by so doing we save some of the finer, more fragile pieces of the potter's wheel from being shattered. There may be bargains in excelsior, just as there are in dimities, but the public is not discriminating, and you are liable to have your feelings hurt if you ravel out the best of your mental tissue for stuffing. You may have paid 25c per, for your lawn gown, only to have Mrs. Jones flutter out upon her front porch in a gown of identically the same stuff for which she gave up only five cents per at the B. S. Monday morning. Whose fault is it if you have to see to the wash-

ing Monday morning and Mrs. Jones has a "hired girl?" You have put the difference into your lawn gowns, while you have been keeping some worthy girl from a good home.

The Governor and the Mayor, the Tax Taker and the Census Maker and their many satellites in the political plum garden have been making merry in the fields and beneath the fruitful vines and trees. They feasted, and forgot. Forgot that upon high Olympus Jove was withholding his thunderbolts, garnering the rain and setting the sun, day after day, in unveiled, awful splendor above the picnic ground of the royal merry-makers. Pan piped amid the reeds and rushes, piped that they might dance, shouting triumphantly. "After us, the Deluge."

But lo! the deluge was long delayed; but still they sang and danced. Then the plums began to waste of their fatness, the grasses to faint along the shrunken streams and the shrill screech of the locust forbode a famine in the land. Suddenly broke the cry of a fearful people, which even reached the Bottom like ears of the feasters among the plum trees, "There is Judas among the mighty; he has betrayed us, else why should the great Jove thus turn his face away from us?"

Upon the cry of "Judas," the Tax Taker turned upon the grieving Census Maker, saying, "It is thou! Some hateful fault hast thou been hiding. It is this which angers and brings a hateful plague upon a goodly people."

"Not so," replied, in wrath, the Census Maker; "not so. More like, it seems to me, to be you gayly carping Gas Collector, who has meted out injustice and brings leanness to the land. Let us go hence and bid him turn off the gas he wasteth in the day time."

But the Gas Collector, hearing, made answer lightly: "Of truth nothing have I done. Believe me, it is the Mayor who fetcheth destruction upon us. In secret he hath sought to fell the tree, which, by reason of his girth, he dare not climb. Let us fall upon and slay him. Let us smite this dry rock that water may fall upon the desert."

But the Mayor, who, in the scanty shade of falling plum trees, was boring yet another eyelet in the belt of state, overhearing, turned upon them sadly:

"Why have you no patience that you so wrongly do accuse me? No secret fault of mine doth so delay the favor of the gods! Why do the people cry against me? I, who have ever irrigated the waist places, have opened wide the doors of plenty? Harken to me, for it is the Governor—the Ruler of the Seven Cities of Cibola, who skims the heavens of clouds and piles the dust before our portals. He gathereth his glad rags about him, and refuseth to beseech. Let us fall upon him. Let us lay him low."

"To the Governor! For some secret of his, doth Jove refuse us!"

"It is enough," replied the Ruler of the wasted land of Quivera, turning the signet ring upon his shrunken finger. "I have done no evil thing, that the juices dry within the corn, but my children oppress me. I am weary. Get you to your houses. Pull close the blankets of your tepees; put forth rain barrels, for I will abase myself. I will bring down 'zwei rain' from those Olympian heights. For the people! For the people!" A crackling as of meeting

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clouds ran along the south. "Hark ye! It thundereth."

"Not so," replied the wily Census Maker. "His Excellency goeth upon his knees!"

Then of a truth the rain barrels overflowed, the breathless grass lifted and the shrunken stream rose up and hastened to the sea.

The people laughed who late had sorrowed, and like he of ancient lore, who had but to put in his thumb to pull out a plum, His Excellency murmured, "What a brave boy am I." The Salvation Army woman, with tearful eyes, bent upon the dust wherein she kneeled, murmured, too, and bending low, I heard, "God is good; God is very, very good." Perhaps she did not know about His Excellency.

Two little birds are standing in the rain which fills the gutter on the veranda roof. They are dipping their beaks as far as possible in the cooling water, then lifting their shining heads to the fresh-washed sunlight. They are fluttering tiny wings across the surface of their little stream—no doubt to them an ocean—and shaking the round raindrops about in a very ecstasy of delight.

In their swelling, thankful bird hearts I am sure the echo rings, "God is good. God is very, very good."

I have not read anything lately; have not seen anybody or heard "things," and it is scarcely necessary for me to demonstrate any more fully than I have already done that I do not know anything. If I were sensitive about this lack I would, no doubt, stop writing letters. Nobody is at home, and if they are, they do not wish it spoken about. The saints forbid that I should be ashamed of the slight strain of Celtic blood I inherit from Paw.

Mr. Thomas J. Kelly, late of the musical columns of the Bee, has gone to join his wife on the shore of Lake Michigan, where, I believe, they expect to combine work with pleasure during their vacation. What a deplorable habit the work habit is. It leads one to take his pleasures so seriously. Mr. Kelly has left an "understudy" in charge of musical Omaha during his absence.

Somebody will probably play thunder, but perhaps the "understudy" will not hear it, as he has stuffed cotton in his ears, so that nothing will distract his attention and make him forget the last words of the master. His highest ambition is to do everything "like 'ell he did!"

"The bell strikes one!" It is all very well for Duncan not to hear it, but it behooves Penelope to pay attention, if she does not wish the iced tea to warm up and the steak to cool down.

I will write you perhaps once more before we, the family, leave town.

As always,  
PENELOPE.

Our dachshund is a clever beast:  
He wagged his tail from west to east  
And back again, until we leased  
Our flat and moved up town:  
But now his compass hath no East  
Nor West; he wags—oh, prudent beast!  
He wags it up and down.

—Town Topics.



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