

MISS PENELOPE, OMAHA

My Dear Eleanor:—Doubtless you have noticed many funeral processions, have observed the solemn stately movement of the vehicles, and the subdued, mournful air of every one, including the hired drivers—but have you ever taken particular notice of the return of the same procession? Where is the solemnity now? Even the horses flick their tails gaily, hold up their heads smartly, and trot along; as if to say—"Well, for goodness sake, we've had a doleful enough time, let's brace up if possible." I am not the first person who ever noticed this peculiarity, it impressed an obscure poet by the name of Riley, to such an extent that he wrote a poem about it—"When the Hearse Comes Back." Its just an illustration of the fact that humanity is not built for gloom. When a man or woman arrives at a point where he or she likes to breakfast, lunch and dine on large chunks of despair, you can make up your minds that the daily papers in the town where they live will, sooner or later, have material for startling slug heads. It may be poison, it may be cold lead, or in an extreme case, too much Missouri water, but it will surely come.

This idea suggested itself to me from observing the effect the forty days' abstinence from the flesh pots of Egypt seems to have on people. Aah Wednesday began it—the procession of fugitives from the world, the flesh and the devil started out rather morunfully. Jewels, laces and frivolities of all sorts disappeared, prayer books replaced them, and the society girl who posed for doing the proper thing, resolutely declined the theatre, eschewed theatre parties and scarcely approved even a dry bite at the club, though occasionally to oblige a friend, she took it, in fact one evening I was lunching there.—I am not a church woman, and a very gay party entered. I caught this during the conversation: "Say, Jess, what became of that St. Louis man of yours?" "Oh!" Jess nonchalantly replied. "He played an act from the Marble Heart on me, borrowed a ring with five stones in it, and failed to come back." This is apropos of nothing, in this mosaic work of mine. I am liable to drop in every now and then a gem like that.

The girl, who for six weeks hadn't a rag to her back, and never expected to have anything, appeared last Sunday. I do not know whether the Associated Charities provided her tailor made gown and the wonderful creation of tangled rainbow gleams which crowned her graceful head, but it was all there, and the girl herself a new creation of smiles and clothes, and why not—the procession was coming back.

Trinity Cathedral as usual was beautifully decorated, and the music of the high order we expect from Mrs. Cotton's leadership. She sang "The Lord is Risen," with an echo effect, from the surpliced choir boys which was lovely.

The town seemed a vast garden of white flowers; Easter lilies nodded at you between the parted lace curtains of every window, and waves of perfume floated out from every opened door; women with smiling faces passed you, occasionally one with a light in her eyes you know came from something deeper than worldly good or store.

It was rather an abrupt plunge for society—from Frankinsence and myrrh from the confessional and prie-Dieu—to Loie Fuller Monday night. My lady, with her hands still warm from the devotional clasp of prayer, daintily applauded the evolutions of Loie.

The highest priced of us here are not exactly inlaid with gold, and there seemed to be precious little sense in our putting up a dollar and a half a seat to

see an indifferent variety performance, redeemed only by Miss Fuller's startling effects, which were wonderful, tho' due chiefly, it seemed to me, to the skill of the Electrician, but you know I am not a critic. Everybody who is anybody—and everybody who is trying to be somebody, and a lot of somebodys who are really nobodys was there, and one and all felt rather taken in.

Thursday Mrs. Cummings gives a luncheon for the Buds which naturally exclude a full blown flower like myself—its a little trying on the rose no longer young—and not exactly old; she can't make up her mind whether to draw the leaves together and make a dash for youth for another brief space, or just drop into the pot pourri jar and have done with it. How would you like to be only a fragrant memory, Eleanor?

Our absentees are returning to their native sand hills. Miss Linda Curtis, well known socially, came home this week from an eastern trip, also Miss Nellie Wakely, who has for two months been visiting her brother's family in Chicago. Mrs. Lewis Reed arrived home Monday, after ten months spent in Germany with her children. The Mynheer seems to have agreed with her; she looks awfully well and says they all made great progress in the language. I've no doubt she will enjoy my running in occasionally and saying: "Wie befinden sie sich, and zweie bier." Do you know I can carry on quite an animated German conversation? Which being translated runs like this—"Have you a green book? No, I have a brown book. Is Bella's book also brown? No, Bella's book is blue."

Miss Mary Noah is home from North Berkeley, California, and Rumor says she is soon to go east for her trousseau, as she is to be married in June to Mr. Crofoot, one of our most promising young lawyers—not but what they all promise.

Yamagatta has arrived! I did not realize it until now—but all my life I have been waiting for, expecting, this moment, this supreme crisis—at one time I feared Yamagatta might not come, may I never again taste such bitter despair—but he is here! General Copping, his Aide, and an hundred soldiers brave, have escorted him with martial music to the Millard hotel. I hope Mr. Markel will not make a mistake and give him chop sticks for his oat meal. The Japanese understand as much about spoons as about guns, which the Chinese will assure you is a good deal.

Mrs. Gen. Brook, formerly of Omaha, now of Minneapolis, is in town the guest of Mrs. William Redick. A number of quiet little things have been given her, as she has many friends here.

Speaking of them makes me think of a funny story. Shortly before they were ordered away from here, Gen. Brook went one morning to the butcher shop to look after his particular cut of beef. A simple circumstance, but simple things have decided Waterloos. That same morning Mrs. Chas. Dael sent her son Luke, a mature youth of seven summers to the same shop for five cents worth of salt pork. Luke obediently set out, and shortly returned. "Did you bring the pork, Luke?" asked his mother. "No," the young man replied, "but I ordered two chickens, a beefstek and a dozen chops." "Why, what do you mean. I wanted pork at once." "Well, General Brook was in the shop; you don't suppose I could ask for five cents worth of salt pork do you?" Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings we get our finest criticisms. This end of the century abounds in gems, which fall in unexpected places and bring forth strange fruit.

Eleanor, did you ever have a feeling

that, like America, you were about to be discovered? Its not a nice feeling—its the sort the villain in the play must have when the immaculate heroine points her index finger to the exit—upper Right Hand—and says: "Go, you have deceived me. I will see your face no more!" Probably she sups with him after the opera is over, but that is none of our business. Speaking of dramatics, I hear Frank Lea Short is to present "The Bells" here May 7. Eleanor, if you have not heard Irving do not waste your money. Frank Lea is "youst so good, und scheaper."

But to return to our mutton. If we are found out let us buy us an island, start a paper, subscribe for it ourselves, write for it, read it and advertise in it—ourselves, and let the rest of the world go to Venezuela—if it like.

I am so anxious to see you; come up over Sunday. Did I ever tell you what a well known politician once told me? He had been absent from home several days, and on his return his little daughter greeted him enthusiastically saying: "Ob, Papa, I'm glad you've come, the Donkey's have been so lonesome."

Come whenever you can, to your lonely
PENELOPE.
Omaha Wednesday, April 8, 1896.

Stuart Robson.

In a recent interview when asked if he came from a theatrical family, Stuart Robson said:

"Far from it. My parents were rigid Methodists at a period when even loco-foco matches were preached against as an invention of the devil. When I was about twelve years old my family moved to Baltimore. There I saw John Owens and immediately became stage struck. Often John Sleeper Clarke and I followed Owens from one end of Baltimore street to the other, as if he were some superior being from another world. Edwin Booth, Clarke, John Wilkes Booth, W. Talbot, Somerfield Barry and I chummed together a good deal at that time. Among our diversions was the erection of an amateur theatre in the cellar of a shoemaker on Calvery street. The admission was about three cents. One of the plays that I recall was Alessandro Masseroni, the King of the Bloody Thieves. Every actor was permitted to say what he pleased, provided it helped along the situation. My great hit consisted in chopping off the head of Edwin Booth, as it lay upon a block."

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