

OMAHA LETTER.

Omaha, Nebr.,
May 10, 1901.

Dear Eleanor:

"Drip, drip over the eaves,
and drip, drip over the leaves,
As if it would never be sunshine again."

Possibly this will reach you in a blaze of sunlight, but the surroundings from which it is about to be evolved are dreary enough. The brilliant green lawn across the way and the shivering vines clinging to the strings stretched across our bow window look absurdly unreal, like painted stage scenery, a travesty on nature.

The rain drops come down so large and sad, they look as if they had a mind to freeze and hang midway. A diabolic little wind has somehow escaped the custody of the North and snips at the tender things of spring like a cruel step-mother.

Our household arrangements are run on such a cart iron plan that mother shuts down the furnace after the first of May, Sundays and week days alike. She is as sensitive to the interpretation of her laws as the Mayor is toward his. We are shut up whether we like it or not. I am bundled up in a shawl writing with stiff fingers and disfigured by a red nose, so you need have no fear of my annual spring poem today. I am sure mother's conscience does not trouble her any; she thinks she knows I can go down and sit by the kitchen range, if I so desire, but that is a proposition similar to the soldier's riding the general's horse. He can do so any time he wants to, but the chances are he'll never want to.

I went down to the kitchen for a few moments, and it seemed that every place I located myself and book, I was in the cook's way. I moved four times and then Phoebe said with a satirical laugh, "Miss Pennelly sut'nily doan seem built fer de kitchen." Would a sensitive soul like mine, especially during the throes of composition, need more?

When I was a little girl I used to go away and hide after unjust treatment and spend exquisitely painful hours thinking how mean they would feel when they found me dead. But I never died. Just as I was about to expire, I was sure to smell stewing chicken and lemon pies, and in that way the grave was robbed of a tender victim.

A little of that old time feeling returned this morning. I tried to fancy Mother coming to find me, pencil in hand, stiff and lifeless, struggling in spite of sympathy to the bitter end. Like the poets and writers found starved in their attics, stretched without life across some immortal poem.

The whole idea is thrilling, but after all I do not believe I am constructed on heroic lines. I guess I will go down and try a bit of tact on Phoebe.

Another day has dawned and the family bulletin announces no change for the better in my condition. Here is nothing for it I guess but to force mind to rise superior over matter and make myself believe this is a comfortable old world, even if the furnace is out and spring weather failing to arrive on schedule time.

We have had a charming small boy visiting us for a couple of weeks. His mother is some distant kin of my father. Bertram is only eight years old, but extremely bright and entertaining. He is a devout little romanist, and goes down on his knees night and morning with a regularity which nearly paralyzes Rob, who refuses to say his prayers at any time of the night or day.

A week ago Sunday I asked Bertram if he would go to church with us. He assented with a readiness and grace which forbade the idea of any bigotry on his part. The sermon was rather too long, and I frankly confess I did not

have the dimmest idea what it was about.

After we came home and had our dinner the two small boys came up to my room. Bertram looked rather serious, even a bit anxious, and finally he said to me, "Cousin Penelope, what Bible was it that man was preaching out of this morning?"

"Why, there is only one Bible, Bertram; he was preaching out of that one, of course."

"Well," responded Bertram with the air of a soldier resolved to do his duty or die, "he didn't tell it right then; he said the disciples pushed the little children away from Christ on the Mount and it doesn't say in the Bible that the little children were ever pushed."

A faint color crept into the usually pale cheeks of Bertram.

"I think, dear, the minister was using his own language in telling about it, and may just have said carelessly that the little ones were pushed, don't you?"

"O, but I do not think people should be careless about what the Bible says, do you, honest, Cousin Penelope?"

I was saved the necessity of an immediate reply by the fact that Rob began jumping up and down, and yelling like a Comanche Indian. "Dr. Thompson is a bad minister, and tells—"

I laid a rather severe hand over his mouth in another moment, in a paroxysm of anxiety. Dr. Thompson might be below stairs that instant for all I knew.

When I weakly took refuge in the easily diverted character of the childish mind, and told Rob he might take the candy from the desk drawer, if he would be quiet. "You must give half of it to Bertram," I said, "or since he is the oldest, you would better give him a little the most."

Rob swept a glance over Bertram's slender frame, then took stock of his own goodly proportions, and said glibly, "I guess his stomach 'aint much bigger 'an mine."

Needless to say Rob had the lion's share, owing to the fact that Bertram insisted he only wanted a very little.

I am afraid if I had been Moses, I should have smuggled away a few of the flesh pots and brought them forth when the people became obstreperous. You know my unworthy policy of sliding out of unpleasant situations in the easiest way possible for myself. I am aware that a model sister would have scouted to point a moral or drive a lesson home, but I did not; I called the discussion off by a bribe. Ever since, I have writhed internally under Bertram's inscrutable glances. I am sure he looks on me as a clever imitation of a lady, but places me theologically only a notch above the Rev. Thompson. There is no doubt about a moral coward experiencing some very low moments. There is an added pang of mortification in my case, when I realize that my late ones were all on account of an eight-year-old boy.

Last Sunday's paper? Yes; I saw it—but only through the zeal of an interested friend, were the musical notes, for which the Bee is justly celebrated, placed before me.

Funny, wasn't it? I think if there is anything more touching than Signor Tomaso Kelly's suggestion that I take bromo as an antidote for my admiration of Mr. Gareissen's voice, it is his sympathy for Mr. Gareissen as the victim of such fervid admiration; he talks as if he feared Mr. G— would wither away and be no more. Can't you just see the great scalding tears, which would furrow the signor's Italian cheek, if he were called on to send his respects to the remains of Mr. G— in the shape of white flowers bearing the legend, "Requiescat in pace?"

But my case is easy; all I have to do is to take bromo—not an expensive remedy, but I can't imagine what he will advise you to take—probably would suggest

that you swallow the staff as a means of bracing up. On the whole, however, I think the sympathy of the public is up to Signor, as there is no remedy known for what ails him.

You and I may simmer down in the course of time; Mr. Gareissen is strong, and he may eventually rise above the red light of our enthusiasm, which I must confess has silhouetted him rather strongly against the background of the Signor's ever pale condemnations. Did you ever read one of his criticisms of this man for whom he feels so sorry? They run like this: "Mr. Gareissen was well received in spite of the 'gutteral' quality of his tones." Now since no one else ever noticed the "gutteral tones" the Signor is at least entitled to the rank of discoverer in this line. Fifthly and lastly, as the musical critic of the Bee has led out so magnificently in the free dispensary line for afflicted females, I do not like to be outdone in generosity, and will give you a bit of advice.

If you ever find yourself placed in such a situation that you have to listen to the Signor Thomaso's singing—do not waste your money on bromo—get an anaesthetic. Yours to the end,

PENELOPE.

First Yellow Journalist—I came near losing my job the other day.

Second Yellow Journalist—How so?

First Yellow Journalist—Well, for a time it looked as if that fellow I interviewed was going to corroborate what I said.—Town Topics.

He—I told your father frankly that I couldn't support you.

She—What did he say?

He—He said he had had the same experience.—Town Topics.

Mr. Squeegie—It's pretty difficult to make Miss Hardy blush, isn't it?

Mrs. Squeegie—John Henry, explain this minute how you know that.—Town Topics.

British Medical Institute.

Has Been a Success from the Start. Its Office in the Sheldon Block, Cor. of 11th and N Streets, is Crowded Daily.

A staff of eminent physicians and surgeons from the British Medical Institute have, at the urgent solicitation of a large number of patients under their care in this country, established a permanent branch of the Institute in this city in the Sheldon block, corner of Eleventh and N streets.

These eminent gentlemen have decided to give their services entirely free for three months (medicines excepted) to all invalids who call upon them before June 1st. These services consist not only of consultation, examination and advice, but also of minor surgical operations. The object in pursuing this course is to become rapidly and personally acquainted with the sick and afflicted, and under no condition will any charge whatever be made for any services rendered for three months to all who call before June 1st.

The doctors treat all forms of disease and deformities, and guarantee a cure in every case they undertake. At the first interview a thorough examination is made; and, if incurable, you are frankly and kindly told so; also advised against spending your money for useless treatment.

Male and female weakness, catarrh and catarrhal deafness, also rupture, goitre, cancer, all skin diseases and all diseases of the rectum are positively cured by their new treatment.

The chief consulting surgeon of the Institute is in personal charge.

Office hours from 9 a. m. till 8 p. m.

No Sunday hours.

Special Notice—If you cannot call send stamp for question blank for home treatment.

THE RUBAIYAT OF HOUSE CLEANING.

"Twas long ago that
Omar sweetly sang,
In Persian lands
his singing clearly rang—
Of wines and roses
did the Persian write,
Of other things
my ruder harp shall twang.

For lo! the spring is here
with all its hope,
With all its scrubbing pails
and cakes of soap,
And women go about
with mops and brooms
And with the dirt of many
months they wildly cope.

Their heads enwrapped about
with towels white,
They get up early—yes,
when still 'tis night,
And tear the pictures
from the dusty walls
And tumble furniture
from left to right.

The carpets, too, are yanked
from off the floors,
And new, fresh paint is daubed
on kitchen doors,
And everything you touch
has varnish on—
You count your troubles
by the scores and scores.

When home you come at night
and want to rest
You find you're quickly
in the work impressed,
"Now, John, just put
that stovepipe up," she says,
You go to work—well,
you can guess the rest!

From wobbly ladders
you are sure to fall,
And as from underneath
you slowly crawl,
With sooty face and hands
and bruises blue,
"Just see what you have done,"
she'll wildly call.

"You've simply spoiled that
carpet new and fine
And bent that stovepipe
till it's out of line,"
And then she'll sit her down
and weep a few,
While you bind up your wounds
with rags and twine.

And then of course,
the carpets you must tack,
And in doing that you give
your thumb a whack,
And get your knees all
stiffened up, you know,
And very nearly break
your suffering back.

The pictures, too,
must find a newer place,
To hang them you must help
with your best grace,
And like as not before
your work is done
A frame will fall on you and
knock in half your face.

And finally, as wearily
you grope to bed
With skinned up hands and eyes
all rimmed with red,
You'll stumble near the bottom
of the stairs
Upon a pile of things,
and nearly break your head.

At last you'll get to bed
and fall asleep,
But through your dreams wild
scenes will wildly creep
And you will think you still
are cleaning house
And in your dreams you'll
sadly sigh and weep.

Ah, gentle spring, with
budding flowers and trees,
With aching backs and
stiffened joints and knees,
You are the gladdest time
of all the year,
I don't think—excuse the slang—
your pardon, please.

W. R. Dunroy, in
Sioux City Tribune.