PROPOSALS FROM FAR AND NEAR ARE SENT TO OREGON'S CHARMING JUNE QUEEN

Many Amusing Letters Received by Miss Clara Louise Webb From Unknown Suitors Who Ask for Her Hand and Estate.

BY LEONE CASS BAER.

EVERY person, who either by accident or design, occupied a small spot in the calcium light of publicity, has, as a consequence, epistles thrust upon him which, if published, would seem almost incredible. Santa Claus, perhaps, heads the list, with Rockefeller, Helen Gould and Roosevelt following close. Actor folk, musicians, artists and authors have to pay the penalty of the press agent's sins and shortcomings, and in every mail are the recipients of all sorts and conditions of unsolicited letters. Some people receive letters, some acquire letters and some have letters thrust upon them. Miss Clara Louise Webb is one of the latter.

MISS WEBB IN A CHARACTERISTIC POSE

MISS WEBB ON HER FAMOUS MOUNT "FIDDLESTICKS"

Any one who has read the Pacific Coast magazines and newspapers, or has visited the fruit and livestock exhibits of the last four years, has heard or read of the Webb farm, its famed Lambert cherries, its prize stock and its able manager.

Briefly stated, the farm, which is 12 miles from Portland on the Base Line road, contains 200 acres of land all under cultivation. The land was cleared and brought to its present high state of improvement under the management of the late A. T. Webb. The farm was bequeathed to his three daughters, and for the last three years, Miss Clara L. Webb has had its running entirely in her own hands, and it is a conceded fact that she has been most successful.

It was my very good fortune to spend one long golden day last week with Miss Webb on her fruit and stock farm. I had arrived close onto noon after a ride through the delicious morning air and various scents of earth and growing things.

"Will you walk into my parlor," sang this wholesome looking spider of the Webb home. "'Tis the prettiest little parlor," etc. And, verily, it was. A great living-room, with a cherry fire crackling in a huge grate; a piano in a well-lighted corner covered with music, ragtime and otherwise; a wealth of books and magazines, and oodles of comfy chairs and cushions everywhere that something else wasn't.

"You are just in time for luncheon," said this likable hostess. "Please," to the housekeeper, "add one more plate."

The latter matter-of-fact statement is in itself a keynote to Miss Webb's daily life, and I, figuratively, took off my hat to her. Rapidly I conjured up visions of other homes where an unexpected visitor dropped in. Johnny must fly to the grocer for more bread and a rapid-fire dessert, while an extra chop must be added for the extra mouth. No such scurrying at Miss Webb's menu. She just ordered another plate.

To meet Miss Webb is just like opening the window of a close compartment on a delicious June day. The very first breath is an inspiration. Somehow I just wanted to push all my hair off of my forehead, and my tired eyes and let this soother minister to me. Her exuberant animal strength must needs carry with it hopefulness and courage. She is a tonic and the blessed part of it is that she is wholly unconscious of it, and gives lavishly of her rich personality.

* * *

It isn't at all easy to get her to talk about Clara Louise Webb. She will tell you all about her cherries, and her horses, and the porkers, and she is exceptionally well posted on current events, but she just laughed and crinkled her big gray eyes at me when I short circuited about to my lady of the Lamberts.

"I'm clearing my desk of rubbish this afternoon," said Miss Webb. "Would you like to continue our visit in my den?"

I eagerly assented and we climbed the stairs to a big girly looking room. Photographs and pictures of various kinds were decorative bits against the cool walls, and feminine tributes to vanity lay [illegible] about. Oh, she's a rib of Adam, all right, all right, even if she does know an about pruning and spraying and tilling and marketing. Frilly silk petticoats, lace be-billowed flounces, and handsome gowns peeped out from a huge closet, and a big fat love of a muff was in plain sight. Dainty gloves and laces and nice smelly bottles and boxes adorned the dressing table, and her desk was positively the most uncivilized looking business concession of all. But she seemed to know just what each little dark pigeon-hole would unearth.

"Don't you get quantities of mail?" I queried.

"Oh, yes, just stacks of it; but its mostly relative to my stock or my fruit farm. And that sort of mail is always acceptable, for I keep in touch with all that pertains to my work."

"But you get unsolicited letters, don't you?" she was asked.

A smile that broke into a ringing big laugh was the answer, as Miss Webb searched among a pile of papers destined for the fire.

"You shall judge for yourself. Here's the very funniest letter I ever received," and the farmeress settled her lithe khaki-clad figure in a chair. Did I tell you she wears a khaki skirt for her every-day regalia, a full wide skirt, "so I can get over the fences easily," as she naively explains.

And she wears cutey little lingerie waists, and had on a low, wide collar and dainty bit of lace at the throat, just the same as if there were no prize Poland-Chinas or a nice baby colt expected that very day.

But to return to our muttons. This is an exact copy of the "funniest letter" ever received by Miss Webb:

San Francisco, May 2, 1907.

Miss
Clara L.
Webb.

I seen a account of you in one of our daily papers here So I have become quite interested because of the Exceptional case with woman to do as the paper had you pictured Regular manual Labor on a farm driving team with hay rake attached I thought right then & there if I had a Girl that would do that much or even attempt I might have Been well fixed I was raised to that kind of work In my young days & I took delight in the work to Especially milking I used to Be the Boss of them all my people had cows Horses sheep pigs geese Turkeys and all different Specie of Fowl them was my Happy Days untill I drifted into City life I was Clerk in one place for 7 years but I am Sick & Tired of it all and still as old Rach of course I have Let a whole Lot of chances go by and now at 45 I am willing to get coupled with a woman of your get up willing to do some thing for herself & be content with that kind of life I am willing to share it with you and make it a Joint co Partnership and add my Skill to your money consideration This is no idle talk I mean Business and also Wish to Impress on your mind I am no Fortune Hunter nor do I want to take advantage not only of you But nor any of your sex Eighter from Fraud or Deception that would Benefit me in any consideration I have not got down to these unscrupulous or degrading methods of work yet I have still got a spark of Honor Left I am saying this because you might think by writing to a Stranger that I have sincere motive I want to say right here my mind is free from any wrong in this matter only it anything to get your acquaintance and know and learn each other better and Then you will know that I am possessed with all these noble qualities or attributes that go to make up the real Gentleman I will say I have such qualities as the Following force of character and a strong Positive nature with a Keen sense of Justice not Bad Looking dark brown Hair with blue eyes Height 5 feet 6 Temperate in all things disposition good and kind & considerate in Nature I am some what of an Idealest and strong in that direction and a great student in or on general subjects as to the conduct and Well Being of Governments conducive to the Best Interests of all the people—I have had my say—now mister if you think I am worthy of any consideration from you say only as a convienent correspondent I would be Glad to hear from you anything you wish to know I would Jump at the Chance to do you a service Even though we are at Present mere Strangers to Each other that is all right Just investigate And you will See I am all I claim in this short Essay on myself hoping to hear from you any way

I remain
Yours

Only the name and address are left out. "Isn't he an unmitigated ass?" laughed the recipient of this modern Lothario's missive. "Oh, the egotism of these unknown writers, the 'I' in their vocabulary is certainly an overworked medium.

"Now, this one," she explained, still bubbling, "is an achievement in literary style and sentiment. In orthography, too, and punctuation," she continued, gravely, "this applicant is almost an expert." She handed me the following and we giggled in unison over its possibilities:

Dre Miss clara l Web.

I note A nice story about you and yore picter in A Chicago paper and we to say I hav no objections to you for a wife. I think you are about the real thing and certainly your picter looks good to me. say chara if you could send me the money to come I sure will be there proper quick. I am not abel to work much as I have a week hack, but I can help take the job. I am a widower with an children one is almost growd the youngest is 2 yerrs, I will be glad to here from you soon. I could come out most any time.

please let me here soon.

respectfully—

Another, in better English, but with the same old sweet (?) story looming up in the background, was the following from an adjoining state:

Mrs. Clara L. Webb, Portland Or.—My Dear Miss Clara: Possibly you will be very much surprised to hear from me and then wonder who "me" is, but you can just look at the close of my letter to see my name and address, and I will tell you why I write. You see it's this way. I happened to see your picture and a description of your home and farm life, and I am just of the same opinion as yourself regarding farm work. I just decided I would write you a letter and ask a few questions about yourself. I would like to know if you own the farm? What kind of climate, also seasons, if Spring is early or late and if the Winters are "awful" cold, then have you any rain, scarcely? Do you do your own shearing? Do you keep company with anyone specially and would you consider a proposal? I will write you a long letter about myself right away. I will ask you to answer just as you would an intimate friend, for I would certainly like to correspond with you awhile at least, and perhaps something makes my home at the Webb farm. Yours sincerely.

Still another prospective swain with an eye for business sent the following:

Arkansas City, Kan., April 19, 1909.—Miss Clara L. Webb, Portland, Or.—Miss Webb: I lately read in our paper about you conducting a very large farm business and was so very much interested about it that I felt as if I really wanted to know if it was all true, and you as if I should a personal letter from you if it is convenient for you to answer same. And will thank you ever so much, and I would appreciate a picture too, and a full description and a lock of your hair. What is your income and are you at present engaged? If so let me hear at once, awaiting an anxious reply I am.

* * *

Begging letters are a matter of course, but Miss Webb says she receives comparatively few of this species. One she told of was in the accepted highwayman style or "hand over and deliver." The letter was from a perfect stranger, who wished a gentle loan, and mapped out the circuitous method by which it was to be sent, so that the borrower's "folks wouldn't need learn of it."

Following close on this, communication from idle folk, hard-up for amusement, and whose ideas of Miss Webb's spare time and common sense are about equally balanced. They want to "correspond" with my Lady of the Lamberts. Most of them frankly state their views, some beat about the bushes, and others hint delicately of their lonely conditions. It is hardly necessary to add that these missives all find homes in the cavernous depths of the beribboned waste basket that yawns by the side of Miss Webb's roll-top desk.

Autograph letters she doesn't mind so much, for the sometimes enclosed postage stamps are handy and the cards can be used to make notes on.

Recently among her mail she found the following letter, written evidently in simple, earnest faith:

Evansville, Ind., May 29, 1909.—Well I was reading a paper and about I Would drop you a few line in gard to my mother brother I am on the hunt of him and thoug you could let me to one brother was name Westly and him Webb and my mother name was emen I will rite you a letter tell you all about family. Respect MRS. MATTIE GRIER.

In this instance Miss Webb was unable to be of any help. Frequently when she receives inquiries regarding Oregon or its farm lands, she either answers these letters personally or sends them to the Commercial Club, where they are given attention.

The following letter is a sample of those of which she is in constant receipt, and for which there is simply no reply other than silence:

Portland, Or., Feb. 28, 1909.—Miss C. L. Webb, Frostdale, Or. My dear Miss Webb—I have intended for some time to write you. I cannot help wondering if there is not somewhere on your farm a "niche" that I could fill.

I am a great lover of outdoor work. I love a garden, either a vegetable or a flower garden. Have some knowledge of landscape gardening. However, I should not object to any work out of doors in which I could be useful.

My profession I am a bookkeeper and stenographer, but for the past eight or nine years have exchanged the narrow routine of clerical work and stagnation, for the exhilaration which comes with the use of the trowel, the rake and the hoe.

I came to Oregon from Illinois, a year ago, and am desirous of doing the work I love best, as my thoughts are always countryward.

A personal interview is more satisfactory, and if you consider my application at all favorably, I should be glad to come out and see you at any time. Very sincerely.

If Miss Webb undertook to answer one-half of these letters she would need a gang of secretaries working non-union shifts. She gave me a little extract from a letter which fell into her hands recently. "Its an answer to a letter of inquiry sent by a friend of mine who wants to know my age," she explained. "I think it's a good joke, don't you?" crinkling those nice big eyes again at me. I read as follows:

Regarding the age of Miss Clara L. Webb, a cursory examination of the records of Alameda County, does not give us the information as to the date of her birth. Possibly her advent here was previous to the time when birth records were kept in that county. We hesitate to indicate what the lady's age would be under these conditions.

For that's the secret of it, she hasn't any age at all. She's just a big, wholesome, sweet-faced girl, with as much capabilities in her finger tips as the average girl has in her whole anatomy. Through the light tone of the Spring winds her skin is fair, smooth and rosy as a baby's, her mouth is all curves of sensitive womanliness, and her voice has the strained liquid notes of vesper chimes. I wanted to kiss the nice little freckles on her nose.

She is the incarnation of and spirit of youth and purpose. She rings true. The seeds of a purposeful life are germinated in her. After all, a purpose is better than a system; it is not so easily thrown out of gear, and it runs on broader lines.

It is written indelibly in her bright, clear, unclouded eyes; in her springing step; in the smile of content upon her lips; in the lift of her shoulders; in the poise of her head, and in the free, glad look with which she breathes in her share of the warm Oregon sunshine. If she were to be taken to the bedside of a sick person, it seems to me the very sight and touch of her were health-giving.

She farms because she enjoys the healthful outdoor life. She likes to see things grow and watch the processes of nature. At the same time the vocation is so remunerative that any sentiment of pastime is obviated. She applies the splendid business acumen which she naturally possesses to the management of the farm, and the results of her methods are self-evident.

* * *

We went for a long stroll about the farm before my rare holiday closed. I made the acquaintance of Frisco, the beautiful year-old collie, whom Miss Webb raised from puppyhood, carrying him about in her pocket during his earliest days. Now he is a great splendid fellow, the comrade of all her jaunts and a reliable watchdog at night.

I was personally introduced to Fiddlesticks, Miss Webb's handsome sorrel saddle horse. He possesses the historical distinction of having been General Shafter's mount in the military parades in San Francisco following the Spanish-American War, and was purchased in Bakersfield, Cal., from Captain McKittrick, Shafter's son-in-law. I met "Mary Ann," the prize brood sow, and I had the extreme felicity of scratching Mary's back with a cane. I met Mary's family of assorted sizes and ages, and her husband, Cuffy, all blue-blooded gentry. We waded through a field of sweet-smelling barley to make the acquaintance of Teddy and Terry, two beautiful thoroughbred colts, who insisted on rubbing noses with us. Next we visited a band of 100 pure-blooded Lincoln sheep, whose spotless raiment and pious expression reminded me of Little Eva somehow. We fed them oats, and they in turn followed us in loving bunches back to the gate.

We visited the baby chickens, the ducks, the cows, not forgetting Sweetheart, the baby calf, and wound up with a view of the famed cherry trees, now loaded down with green fruit.

When I bade good-bye to this daughter of the gods, divinely tall and fair, I carried away a picture of content. I shall always know her as mildly of the Lamberts.

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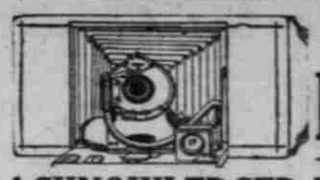

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If Christianity Would Perpetuate Itself, It Must Seize and Appropriate Scientific Knowledge.

BY D. H. HAWKINS.

JUDGING by Mr. Brereton's "Why Worry About the Resurrection?" one might—if one were carelessly disposed—conclude that the world was indeed worrying about the resurrection. To the contrary, however, is the attention of both the religious and secular world fixed primarily upon the material things of earth, rather than upon any thought of tomorrow's sudden ending of all material advantages sooner, that have been secured in certain man through purchased and chartered rights.

Little indeed is man caring about the resurrection, more is he caring about commerce and manufactures. Increasing population and the rapid advance in the price of realties. The world at the present time is too intensely absorbed in money-getting and in pleasure-seeking, in dress and style, in form and fashion, to pay very much attention to those things that make for the moral and spiritual betterment of the race.

But, say the preachers, Christianity is advancing prodigiously. Yes? Well, we have grave doubts about the matter. Very likely there are a greater number of nominal Christians in the world than ever before. But there are not so many spiritual men and women in the church today as there were 10 years ago. Every observing man knows this to be a fact well worth considering.

The church has become materialized and commercialized. The mystery-worth of religion will be emphasized at the sacrifice of what is ideally moral and spiritual. The fact that preachers hand out "bouquets" to their congregations avails not to destroy the logic of facts. Commercialism is the hub upon which modern Christianity is made to swing and the hinge upon which its spirituality doth creak. Under this stress human sympathy is dying out, and it has come now that a man's or a woman's misfortunes in life are made the butt of vulgar ridicule and joke.

We establish charities but to brag up our munificence, and pretend to pity the poor, but the more cunningly to secure charter-grants in these advantages in life which militate against the common good. We pretend to fellowship and boycott the morally strong men and women and patronize those shops where the proprietors are adepts at smutty stories and vulgar jokes. We stop over in our zeal for foreign missions, and, in order to the raising of a "fund," enlarge upon the commercial and trade advantages of the undertaking, appealing more to a nation's cupidity than to its spirituality.

Mr. Brereton thinks spirituality will supplant materialism, and in materialism is supervening spirituality. With murder and theft and burglary and suicide and secret sins of all sorts on the increase in much higher proportion than the increase in population in this country, can it be possible that we are as a Nation becoming more moral and spiritual?

Advisedly, there are, of course, two kinds of materialism in the world: There is the gross materialism of the vulgar, the tendency of which is always down toward the beast level, and there is also the idealistic materialism, the tendency of which is toward what is refined always.

Christianity has already passed through two primary periods, or phases, of decadence and has now entered upon an episcyle of psychic history and of spiritual decline and moral disintegration, that, if it be not soon corrected in the soil of reason and in the integrity of wisdom and of scientific fact, must necessarily result in disaster to the whole human race. Christianity's compound contains many pagan ingredients; yet again, if it would perpetuate itself as a world religion, it will be compelled to seize upon and appropriate to its service the offered machinery of scientific knowledge and fact.

Medford, Or.

ENGLAND REVIVES MARINE

First "Copartnership" Boat Floated in Effort to Regain Ocean Trade.

LONDON, May 29.—(Special.)—The first steamer built under Sir Christopher Furness' labor co-partnership scheme was launched at Hartlepool this week. Dr. MacNamara, Secretary of the Admiralty, was present, and the launch was witnessed by a large number of the public.

Sir Christopher Furness said if England was going to maintain its position in the world of commerce it was absolutely necessary to build vessels of the highest class of workmanship, which should be the envy of the civilized world, and that all the wastage that had been going on for some years should be thrown aside. It was, however, a serious state of affairs that out of 330 shipbuilding berths in the United Kingdom not more than 161 were occupied.

Dr. McNamara said he could give them the assurance that the government intended to maintain the British Navy to a state of unchallenged and unchallengable supremacy. The launch of that copartnership vessel was an epoch in British industrialism. In co-partnership they had a great and galvanizing influence which meant more friendly relationships between capital and labor.

The ship was christened Astana by Lady Furness.

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