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FEMININE CHAT AND CHATTER

GOSSIP AND ADVICE FOR THE WORLD OF WOMEN.

Minnie Snow and the Letter That Never Came—The Poor, Faded Woman Who Was Locked Up for Disturbing the Peace Was, After All, but a Little Girl Grown Old and a Little Discouraged.

BY WINIFRED BLACK.

They arrested her in Chicago the other day— a faded, wistful, mild little woman, carrying a pet dog done up in a newspaper.

The dog's neck was hurt where he had been tied, and some one told the humane officer, and he took the dog away from her and killed him and had the woman sent to the city jail for ten days. Poor thing, she will probably be warm and well fed for that time anyway.

She has haunted the general postoffice for months, they say, the faded, wistful, mild little woman, always at the general delivery window. Day after day she has crept up to that window and asked tremulously "Is there a letter for Minnie Snow?" And day after day the clerk has said, "No letter today," mechanically at first and then kindly, "No letter today."

When they arrested her they asked why she came every day to the postoffice.

"Why," said the woman, opening her wistful eyes very wide, "why, I'm Minnie Snow; you must have heard of my brother, he is very rich. I expect a letter from him with money in it. He loved me when I was little—he used to draw me to school on his sled. And now he is rich and I am poor, and I wrote and told him I was hungry, and when he gets the leter he will be sure to write and send me money, oh, lots and lots of money. He is very rich, he has a fine dairy, as many as six cows, and a house with three bedrooms.

'They say he has a little girl; I wonder if he named her Minnie; he always said he would name his first girl after me, but that," said Minnie Snow, smiling tremulously, "that was just a joke, of course."

Seeing that no one laughed at the poor little old-fashioned joke, Minnie Snow smiled no more, but sighed, shook her poor frowsy head, hugged her meager body, aind went docilely enough with the officers to be locked up for disturbing the peace.

And yet they say she was peaceful enough in all conscience, only, of course, it was a nuisance to have her always expecting a letter and never getting it standing in the sleet and snow and watching the women who did get letters. Young women, pretty women, gaily dressed women—women with bold eyes and lips that had forgotten how to smile as a child smiles—sad women, shabbily dressed, waiting, too, for letters and getting one sometimes, women who looked furtively at every passerby when they opened their letters and read them greedily.

But never any letter for Minnie Snow —never a one.

I wonder where he is, the "rich" brother with the six cows and the fine house with three bedrooms, the brother who used to draw Minnie Snow to school on his sled and fight any boy his size who laughed at him for it?

Was she ever pretty, this poor Minnie Snow—were her cheeks round and rosy, and what color was her hair before it faded? Those poor, gaunt, trembling hands of hers, were they ever little and graceful, and did any one want to kiss them for being so pretty?

Where is her mother today? Asleep, I'll warrant—asleep somewhere in some quiet graveyard in the country, where they all lived together when Minnie Snow rode so proudly to school.

Mothers always get time to write, no matter how rich and great they may become. I've known a mother who had a house with four bedrooms who wrote regularly to women no sweeter to see than poor Minnie Snow. Asleep somewhere, this poor thing's mother, rest assured of that, or she would have had some kind of a letter some day, somehow.

The "rich" brother, what is he like, I wonder, and did he really love his little sister so much, and was he very proud of her, and did he plan to do great things for her when he grew to be a man? Poor brother, perhaps life isn't so very rosy for him, even, all his "vast wealth."

I wonder if he has a wife—a tidy, sensible, practical woman, who wouldn't even hear of poor Minnie Snow coming to visit them with the ragged clothes and her faded face and her queer ways.

And does the wife make brother go to church with her and hear long sermons about "Rescue the Perishing," and does she lead in the singing and know "Throw Out the Lifeline" from beginning to end?

Is she a fine hand with the needle, and does she make clothes for the heathen and help to send missionary barrels far away?

Would she perish of shame if Minnie Snow should find out where the brother, who is so rich and great, lives, and go to visit them and be warmed and comforted and made happy, just because she was Minnie Snow and once had a brother who loved her and was proud of her?

Well, well, who can say? Poor Minnie Snow, I hope they'll be good to you at the Bridewell. You'll tell them all about your rich brother, won't you?—and how handsome he is, and how he loves you and will come after you in a fine "rig." Isn't that what they called it where you came from, poor Minnie Snow?

Do you know what I believe I'll do? I believe I'll send you a letter myself, to the Bridewell, and then one to the General Delivery, so when you get out you'll find one waiting for you. That will show that postoffice clerk a thing or two, won't it Minnie Snow? He won't laugh the next time you ask.

Here's good fortune to you and some little comfort, and may the memory of that brother's face never fade in your loving heart. And whisper, when he hears where you are and comes to take you home with him, maybe he will give you a little frisking calf, like the one you used to pet together there in the apple orchard.

What a fellow he was to fight and struggle, and how he loved sugar, too, "just like a human," your brother used to say.

And he'll let you bring it up for a pet, for after all what are you now but a little girl, grown old and very tired, and a little, just a little discouraged?

Poor Minnie Snow! You and your letter that has never yet come to gladden your heart!

HOUSEHOLD LORE.

A capital method of cleaning copper pans and kettles is to fill them, first of all, with boiling water and then to rub the outside with sour milk. The milk must have reached the condition of thick curds, a little being rubbed on with a piece of flannel. Buttermilk is even more satisfactory. When dry, the metal should be polished with a clean chamois leather.

Garlic juice used to be considered the best cement for fine china in bygone days. To extract the juice from the garlics they were crushed in a mortar and then pressed in a piece of muslin, the juice being then collected and painted on to the broken edges with a brush or a feather.

The finest whiting, crumbled to a powder and then made into a paste with a drop or two of sweet oil, represents an excellent polish for metal dish and pan covers. This should be rubbed on with a piece of flannel, and a little of the powdered whiting inclosed in a muslin bag afterwards sprinkled over the top. A gloss may be obtained by finally scouring briskly with a chamois leather.

A little soap rubbed on the hinge of a door will prevent it from creaking.

An old-fashioned method of cleaning an oven is that of placing a handful of straw inside it and setting fire to it. The oven door must be kept closed until the straw has burned itself out. The smoke was considered to soften the crust of grease and fruit which it is often impossible to prevent after meat or fruit tarts have been cooked in the oven. A knife may be required to scrape the stains, and the whole must be well scoured finally with a cloth wrung out in boiling soda suds.

NOVELTIES IN CUT GLASS.

No longer does the conventional "eleven pieces" fill the serving requirements in cut glass. The thing is to have as much of it as can be obtained and no one should criticise a young housekeeper for wishing to own one of the new mayonnaise, salad and fruit sets consisting of three bowls standing on individual plates. Nor for a tall pitcher and six colonial tumblers and still less for cherishing a longing for a set of six tall and six squat sherbet glasses, as the latter are equally serviceable for ice-creams and cafes parfait.

OLD KID GLOVES.

Given a certain amount of imagination, the spice of originality and some discarded gloves, quite a number of little things can be manufactured by the woman with clever fingers.

Let us first see how we can utilize the long white gloves of suede or kid which fashion decrees, and whose life as a glove is so short. We shall suppose the gloves have been cleaned several times, so that the fingers have become rubbed and spoiled for wear. Cut these off, now remove the buttons, slit the arm part if necessary, and lay it flat on an ironing board and thoroughly clean with benzine or petrol. Next cut a long strip of the kid about one and a half inches wide, fold into three, joining the edges with a thick embroidery thread in any desired fancy stitch. Then cut two more pieces of the material about three inches by one inch; embroider each end with French knots and fashion into a bow. Sew this to the center of the prepared strip, which should be finished off with a hook and latch at either end, and you have a very dainty and uncommon necktie.

The same idea may be elaborated, and a charming belt is the result if a long evening glove be used. In this instance the kid should be doubled and neatly stitched all round, after being prettily embroidered along one side. A buckle is then attached to one end, and eyelet holes punched and buttonholed to receive it.

Hatpins after the same fashion are charming, and both are made in this way. Get some wooden button molds the size you require. Next sew your design on to the kid, cut this out in a sufficiently large round to cover both front and back of the button. Now stretch this round tightly over the mold, and sew securely at the back, in the case of the hatpins being particular to finish off all ends very neatly.

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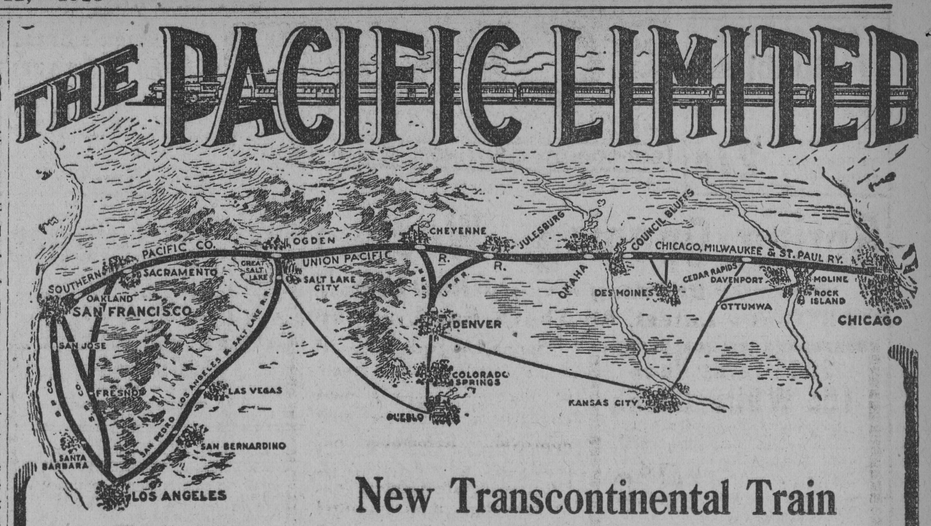

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