

Iron County Register

BY ELI D. AKE.

IRONTON, MISSOURI.

QUAND MEME.

The sun comes up and the sun goes down,
And day and night are the same as of yore,
The year grows green and the year grows brown,
And what is it all when all is done?

The fisher drops his net in the stream,
And the midges dance her love-lit dream,
And what is it all when all is done?
The net of the fisher the burden breaks,
And the dreaming dreamer always wakes!

The tide comes in and the tide goes out,
And a hundred tides are the same as one,
For what can say what I'm writing about,
And what is it all when all is done?

For people must read a great deal of one,
And rubbish and rot are the same as one,
They may as well read what I write, why not?
But what is it all when all is done?

THE STOLEN LOVE-LETTERS.

In the uncertain flickering fire-light
Pretty Maggie Leslie sat pulling a rose
to pieces. Her sister Kate watched her
a few moments impatiently and then
said: "What are you doing, Maggie?
Tired of your new lover, eh?"

"What nonsense! I am not tired of
my new lover, but I am angry at my old
one."

"Very likely. When a girl has dis-
carded a country clergyman with \$300
a year for a baronet with \$30,000, it is
likely she will be angry at the poor
lover troubling her memory."

"I should dismiss the country clergy-
man very readily from my memory, if
he permitted me. I never thought
Archie Fleming could have been so
mean," and Maggie threw the poor
tattered remnant of a rose passionately
away from her.

"I do not believe Cousin Archie
Fleming could do a meaner thing, Maggie.
You must be mistaken."

"I wish I was. Come closer, Kate,
and I will tell you all about it," and
the two young girls seated themselves
on a low ottoman in a confidential atti-
tude.

"Now, Maggie, when and what?"

"The 'when' was two evenings ago.
Sir John and I were coming across the
moor, just as happy as anything, and
I thought Archie was in London, when
we met him suddenly as we turned
into the Hawthorn path. And what do
you think? They rushed into each
other's arms like—like two Frenchmen.
I do believe they kissed each other. It
was 'John' and 'Archie,' and hand-
shaking, and 'How are you, old fellow,'
and that kind of thing, until I was quite
disgusted. Men going on in that way
are so ridiculous."

"By-and-by Sir John remembered
me and supposed 'Archie' knew his
fair parishioner Miss Leslie, and Archie
bowed in the most distant manner and
said 'he had the honor of being my poor
cousin.' Men never can keep anything
and before we had walked a quarter of
a mile Sir John had contrived to let
Archie know how matters stood be-
tween us."

"That was not very pleasant, but of
course you were off with the old love
before you were on with the new."

"Not exactly. I had stopped writing
to Archie, and if he had an ounce of
sense he might have guessed the reason."

Kate shook her head and looked grave.
"Now, Kate, don't be aggravating.
The case is just this. Sir John and
Archie, it seems, are old school friends,
and Archie has all sorts of romantic
notions about fidelity to his friend and
threatens to tell Sir John how badly I
have treated him."

"Then you have seen Archie?"

"Yes. I sent David Baird to tell him
to meet me in the conservatory last
night."

"How imprudent!"

"I had to do it. I wanted to coax
Archie to let me off easily and to give
me back all my letters. I must have the
letters, Kitty. I really must."

"Well?"

"Well, he said some very disagree-
able things—truths he called them—and
I cried and looked just as pretty as I
could. He insisted I was in love with
Sir John's title and money and not with
himself; and when I said that was not
true, and that I loved Sir John very
dearly, he got quite in a temper. It is
my belief that he would rather I mar-
ried for money than love if I don't mar-
ry him. That's the selfishness of men,
Kitty. I wouldn't be as mean for any-
thing. And oh, Kitty, he said he would
not give me back my letters and I
must have them."

"I should not worry about a few love-
letters."

"Kitty, you don't know all, or you
would not say that."

"Tell me 'all,' then."

"I have sent Sir John just—the
same—letters, word for word. You
know I never was good at composition
and when Clara Joyce was here, I got
her to write me some beautiful love let-
ters. She liked doing it, and I thought
I might need them. I copied them for
Archie and they were so clever I copied
them also for Sir John. Now, Kitty, he
said he would show those letters, and he
said he would, how both of them would
laugh at me, I could not bear it."

Kate looked very much troubled.
"Indeed, Maggie, you are right," she
answered. "You must have your let-
ters; and if Archie will not give you
them they must be stolen from him; that
is all about it. It would never do
to let him hold such a power over your
poor little head and it would be worse
after you were married than before it.
You are sure that he will not give them
up?"

"He said he never would give them
to me."

"Perhaps he has burned them."

"O, Kate! you durst not do such a
thing!"

"I dare, under the circumstances.
Of two evils one should choose the
least. Anything, almost, is better than
giving a rejected lover such a power
over you. It would be different if it
was me. I would defy him, and take
the telling in my own hands."

"I could not do that. Archie might
tease me to death first."

"I know, you dear, foolish little
woman. But you shall have your let-
ters, Maggie, so go to bed, and sleep
soundly on my promise."

"When?"

"Perhaps to-morrow. Archie dines
with the Bishop to-morrow. I shall find
no better opportunity, I think."

The next morning proved to be one
of those drenching days quite charac-
teristic of an English November. Still,
about three o'clock, Miss Leslie insisted
on riding to the village. Her grand-
father made some opposition, but soon
gave in to "Kate's set ways," and her
decided declaration "that she would be
ill without her gallop."

Arriving at the village, she stopped
at the parsonage door, and nodded
pleasantly to the housekeeper, who
opened it, she said she was very wet,
and would like to see her cousin and
dry her hat.

The parson was gone to the Bishop's
but if Miss Leslie would come in, there
was a fire in his parlor, and she could
warm her feet, and have a warm cup of
tea; and Miss Leslie, after a little af-
fected hesitation and a little more
pressing consented to do so.

She permitted Martha to remove her
hat and bring her some tea, and then
she sent her down to give the groom a
glass of mulled ale. "I shall rest half
an hour, Martha, and if cousin Archie
is not back by that time I must go, or
else I shall not reach home before
dark."

As soon as the door was shut she
glanced round the room. It was a cozy
place, full of bachelor comforts and
pleasantly littered with books and pa-
pers. The Indian cabinet stood in a
little recess between two windows. She
quietly selected her grandfather's key
and tried the lock. It opened at once
and with an ease that showed it was in
constant use, and the first thing that
greeted her was the faint scent of rose
leaves.

But the letters were not in the draw-
ers and she was on the point of closing
the cabinet in despair, when she re-
membered that her grandfather's had
a secret door that slipped away and
hid a closet between the drawers. It
was likely Archie's had the same. She
sought the spring and it responded at
once to her touch, and there lay the let-
ters, all tied together in one little
bundle. There were not more than a
dozen and Kate with a smile of relief
and satisfaction, put them in her pocket
and relocked the cabinet.

She had scarcely done so when she
heard some one open the front door
with a pass key and come straight up
the stairs. In a moment she had de-
cided that it was not Archie's footstep
and that it must be one of his intimate
friends. In a moment, also, she had de-
cided that if she did not know him he
should not know her. Whoever it was
he did not at once come to the parlor;
he went into an adjoining room, re-
moved his wet coat and boots and came
lounging in, with slippers on his feet
and a cigar in his mouth.

Kate had just finished arranging her
hat and gloves and was going quietly
out of one door when he entered by the
other. For a moment they stood and
looked blankly at each other; the next,
Kate advanced a few steps and said, "I
am waiting to see the clergyman. Do
you know how soon he will return, sir?"

"I think he will be here immedi-
ately," answered the new-comer, whose
first instinct was to say the thing most
likely to detain so beautiful a girl. "I
am sorry to have intruded, but I will
retire at once, if you desire it."

"By no means, sir. I shall not re-
main longer. I expected my brother
with Mr. Fleming, but as my groom is
with me there is no need to wait, es-
pecially as it is likely to be dark very
early."

"I left Mr. Fleming at the Bishop's,
with three other clergymen. Your
brother—"

"O, my brother is not a clergyman,"
and then suddenly remembering a friend
of Archie's who lived at least ten miles
away, she said, "I am Miss Crowther,
of Hill Top—perhaps you know Mr.
Henry Crowther?"

The young gentleman looked at Kate
in utter amazement. In fact he was
Mr. Henry Crowther himself, and he
was not aware that he had ever had any
sister. Who was this beautiful girl
claiming so pleasant a kinship with him?

But almost with the announcement
Kate disappeared. He watched her
horse brought round and saw her mount
and ride away, and then sat down to
smoke in a whirl of curiosity and ex-
citement. "What a bright face! What
frank, charming manners! What a
figure! I wish to everything I had a
sister—or something nice—like that
girl. I do wonder who she is! The
next moment he had rung the bell and
pulled the bell-rope down.

"Laws, Mr. Henry, I knew that was
you a-ringing, which Mr. Archie never
rings that outrageous way. What be-
you wanting, sir?"

"I want to know, Martha, who that
young lady is that left the house twenty
minutes ago."

"Well may you ask, sir, which to do
shows your good sense. That is Miss
Kate Leslie, sir—Mr. Archie's cousin—
a very beautiful young lady, sir, and a
good one, and proud her grandfather is
of her."

"That is all, Martha."

When Archie returned he found Harry
Crowther pacing the room in the
greatest impatience. "How long you
have been!" he exclaimed; "and here
has been the most beautiful girl waiting
for you; and, by everything! she says
she is my sister; and, still funnier, she
did not know that I was her brother."

"What do you mean, Harry?"

"This is what I say."

"O, just too bad! I must ask Mar-
tha about it. She ought not to permit
strangers to come into my rooms."

"Stop, Archie, I have asked Martha.
Her name was Miss Kate Leslie."

"My cousin Kate. Now what could
have brought her here this wet day?"
He thought immediately of his inter-

view with Maggie and of her anxiety
about her letters. "Poor little girl,"
he said, mentally. "I must not punish
her any longer. I will take her her
letters to-morrow."

So the next afternoon he put on his
hat and coat and went to the cabinet
for them. Of course they were not
there. For one moment he was con-
founded; the next his mind had instinc-
tively divined the hand that had robbed
him. He was very angry with his cousin
Kate. He knew at once it was al-
together her doing. If Maggie had
ever dared to try, she would have
screamed in the attempt and betrayed
herself.

It was with a very stern face that he
entered the parlor where Kate was sit-
ting, and he would not see the hand she
held out to him. When they were
alone she asked at once, "Why won't
you shake hands, Archie?"

"How can you expect me, Kate, to
take the hand—"

"That robbed me." Say it if you
wish."

"I was going to say it. Why did you
do it?"

"Because you were torturing little
Maggie, and I will not have her worried
about a few letters. They were hers
not yours."

"I think they were mine."

"That shows a man's honesty in love
matters. The letters were sent to you
under a supposition that you were to
fill a certain relationship to Maggie.
You were found incompetent for that
position, and the favors relating to it
ought to have been returned. A dis-
missed ambassador might just as well
keep the insignia of his office."

"Sit down, Kate and don't put your-
self in a passion. Have I ever done an
unkind thing to either Maggie or you
since we were children together?"

"No, Archie, you have not."

"You really think I would?"

"You said you would tell Sir John
things about Maggie and that would
be unkind. Maggie loves Sir John very
much."

"I would never hurt Maggie. As
your pastor and as your cousin, let me
say I think you have behaved in a very
improper manner."

"Archie!"

"Very improper indeed. You ought
to have come to me. I would have
given you the poor dear little letters;
and as for you telling Sir John anything
to open his eyes, I like him far too well.
The only way to be happy in love is to
be blind."

"You think that is very satirical, I
dare say."

"No, I do not. I am waiting for your
apology, Kate. You know you ought
to make me one."

Kate sat, with burning cheeks, tap-
ping the floor with her foot, and
Archie stood calmly watching her. At
last she said: "You are right, Archie."
Then putting her hand in her pocket:
"Here are the letters. Do what you
like with them. I trust you."

He took them tenderly, and throwing
them into the fire mournfully watched
them turn to gray ashes. Kate's eyes
were full of painful tears.

"Archie," she said, "forgive me. I
acted very impulsively and very impru-
dently. I am ashamed of myself. There
is something else I must tell you about
this miserable affair. I saw a gentle-
man in your parlor and I gave myself
a false name to him."

"O, Kate, see how one fault leads to
another. If you had been doing right
you would not have been ashamed to
confess that you were Kate Leslie. Do
you know the lady whose name you bor-
rowed?"

"No, I know nothing about such a
person."

"Then I will go with you and you
must make an apology to the family."

"Must I do this?"

"You must. It is the least you can do."

"Very well, Archie, I will do it."

But this part of her punishment was
long delayed. The next morning Kate
was very ill, and a severe attack of
rheumatic fever confined her for weeks
to her room. Then the fatigue and ex-
citement consequent on Maggie's mar-
riage threw her back into the inertia of
invalidism, and the adventure was al-
most forgotten in its painful results.

As the warm weather came on she
improved and began to go into society
again. One day there was to be a lawn
party at the Bishop's and she promised
to meet Archie there. She was sitting
resting under a great oak, when she saw
him coming towards her. A gentleman
was with him, whom she recognized at
a glance; she had introduced herself
once to him as Miss Crowther. What
was Archie going to do to her? She
felt almost like crying; but she stood
bravely up as he advanced, and in her
white muslin dress, with roses at her
waist and throat, she made a very
lovely picture.

"Good afternoon, Cousin Kate."

"Cousin Archie, good afternoon."

"Kate, this is my friend Mr. Henry
Crowther."

"Never says, Kitty, to do evil that
good may come; the price is too high."

"You forgive me, grandfather?"

"Yes, Kitty, with all my heart."

"Harry has forgiven me too. You
see, after taking his name in jest, it is
right I make the amende honorable by
taking it in earnest. So, grandfather,
if you will let me, I am going to be Mrs.
Crowther instead of Miss Crowther.
May Harry ask you to-morrow?"

"Yes, he may ask me. He has asked
you, I suppose?"

"And we are to have a wedding, and
no love-letters. I never heard of such
a thing."

"A wedding, and no love-letters,
grandfather. Love-letters are slow, and
old-fashioned, and very dangerous. We
have adopted visits and telegrams in
their place."

The Duty of Parents Towards Children.

Do you ask me what are the rights of
children? They are many; but first, it
is their right to insist that they are not
responsible for being, and that, there-
fore, they are entitled to the benefits of
the wisest experience of those who are
responsible. At least, I insist on that
in their behalf. How shall the children
learn that which is good to know unless
it is taught by those who have them-
selves the knowledge to impart? A
father who has learned the ways of evil,
either by experience or observation,
owes it to his son to warn him of the
dangers which he is liable to meet and
to show him the way to avoid them.
The mother of daughters is specially
charged with a like solicitude for them.
That is a fair and reasonable division of
the immediate parental responsibilities,
though I would hold no mother guilty
of her son's wrong-going, nor ac-
quaint any father of accountability for his
daughter's woe. Delicacy makes neces-
sary the administration of certain grave-
ly important offices which specially con-
cern the mother and the daughter, or
the father and the son. Even on this
point both the mother and the father,
as we generally find them, are open to
serious censure. It is no uncommon
experience of the physician to find well
grown girls cruelly ignorant of them-
selves. To that extent their mothers
are blameworthy. It is a prudish and
mistaken view of her duty to her girls
that leads the mother to keep them in
ignorance of those organic burdens
which she knows they must be called
upon to bear. The physical and mental
condition of thousands of promising
girls is chargeable to the neglect, in-
difference or false ideas of their fathers.
Indeed, a proper parental watchfulness
with reference to the physical care of
children is the exception.

I would like to see parents use the
many gentle means at their command to
win the confidence of their children.
Somehow my livelier sympathies seem
to gravitate in the direction of the boys.
It is not that I lack appreciation of the
trials to which girls are born, but that I
am happy in the knowledge of their nat-
ural tendency to good. That is to say,
the organization of society is such that
girls are kept comparatively apart from
those sinister evils by which boys are
often debauched—as drunkenness, low-
ness, vulgar companionships and the
coarse contaminations to which an out-
side life almost inevitably subjects them.

It should be the father's pride that his
son trusts him and is willing to make of
him a companion, even if he can't al-
ways unbend from the graver mood
which his years and his sense of life's
responsibilities impose on him. He
must sometimes feel the father's anxious
care for that very boy into whose heart
he would cheerfully pour all the sun-
shine of his own. If he opens his nature
the lad is sure to enter, and the larger
nature enfolds the smaller with a broad-
ing fondness and a sympathy in its
struggles that must blend them both in
one for all good acts.

I know of fathers and son between
whom there seems to be no false re-
serve. The hardest necessities have
not, so far as I can discern, yet con-
quered the father's youthful buoyancy.
True, there is in his face an habitual
look that has sometimes saddened me,
but I know it is only the shadow out of
which look at me the eyes of all men
whose youth is past. He can be gay
with the lad and the lad is often silent-
ly grave with him. There is a bond of
secret union between them, and I think
there never were father and son who
had less need of mediation than they.

He gradually drifted into the
fog of sorrow, but I imagine it had its or-
igin in the father's readiness to give the
confidence he asked. They read much
the same books, quicken with very like
impulses and hold some very odd opin-
ions in common. There the similarity
ends. In most things they are oppo-
sites. The lad is of a grave and thought-
ful, almost taciturn, cast, with a tinge
of quaint and whimsical originality.
The father, in his youth was a very
balloon of buoyancy, adventurous, rest-
less, ardent and enthusiastic, neither
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