

SONNET.

No drooping eyelids shadow her bright eyes;
But fearlessly they fix their gaze on mine,
As pure as stars upon my face they shine;
So innocent and yet they seem so wise,
That 'neath their light I throw away disguise
And fall a worshipper at the sweet shrine.
Two little arms about my neck entwined,
Two lips that know not witchery of sighs
Are touched to mine in sweetest of replies,
Then ripple into laughter half divine.
Sweet child, you know not how that kiss I prize,
Nor can I breathe it in this wavering line.—
May thy life's day be bright, and night but given
To end a long sweet even-tide with heaven.

Montreal.

BARRY DANE.

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 discarded 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 clergyman 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 mean 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 attitude.

"Now, Maggie, when and what?"

"The 'when' was two evenings ago. Sir John and I were coming across the moor, just as happy as—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 handshaking, 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 honour 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 between 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 Davie 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 disagreeable 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 married for money than love if I don't marry him. That's the selfishness of men, Kitty. I wouldn't be as mean for anything. 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-letters. 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, if Archie should show those letters, as 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 letters; 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."

"Oh, no, he could never bear to do that. Why, he idolizes them, Kitty. Just before he went

away he told me that they were laid in rose leaves in the drawers of his Indian cabinet."

"Very good. Grandfather sent that cabinet to the parsonage. I dare say it is exactly like the one in his room. If so, it is likely grandfather's key will open the minister's."

"Oh, 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 letters, 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 characteristic of an English November. Still, about three o'clock, Miss Leslie insisted on riding to the village. Her grandfather made some opposition, but soon gave in to "Kate's set ways," and her decided declaration "that she would be ill without her gallop."

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

The parson was gone to the bishop's, but if Miss Leslie would come in, there was a fire in his parlour, and she could warm her feet, and have a warm cup of tea; and Miss Leslie, after a little affected 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 papers. The Indian cabinet stood in a little recess between the 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 drawers, and she was on the point of closing the cabinet in despair, when she remembered 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 letters, all tied together in one little bundle. There were not more than half a dozen, and Kate, with a smile of relief and satisfaction, put them in her pocket, and re-locked 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 decided that it was not Archie's footstep, and that it must be one of his intimate friends. In a moment, also, she had decided that if she did not know him, he should not know her. Whoever it was, he did not at once come to the parlour; he went into an adjoining room, removed 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 immediately," 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 remain longer. I expected my brother with Mr. Fleming, but as my groom is with me, there is no need to wait, especially as it is likely to be dark very early."

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

"Oh, 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 excitement. "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.

"Lawks, 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."

"Very well, sir."

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?"

"Just what I say."

"Oh, this is too bad! I must ask Martha 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 interview 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 confounded; the next, his mind had instinctively divined the hand that had robbed him. He was very angry with his cousin Kate. He knew at once it was altogether her doing. If Maggie had even dared to try, she would have screamed in the attempt, and betrayed herself.

It was with a very stern face that he entered the parlour where Kate was sitting, 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 favours relating to it ought to have been returned. A dismissed ambassador might just as well keep the insignia of his office."

"Sit down, Kate, and don't put yourself 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."

"Do 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 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, tapping 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 imprudently. I am ashamed of myself. There is something else I must tell you about this miserable affair. I saw a gentleman in your parlor, and I gave myself a false name to him."

"Oh, 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 borrowed?"

"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 excitement consequent on Maggie's marriage threw her back into the inertia of invalidism, and the adventure was almost 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 toward 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 brave

ly up as they 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."

She blushed violently, but did not lose her self-possession. "I have met Mr. Crowther, before, once, when I was on a little private masquerade, and assumed the character of his sister. I hope I am forgiven."

"If I had sister, she would have been honored by the assumption. Since the momentary favour I have never ceased to regret my want."

They sat long under the pleasant shade, and in the evening rode slowly home together under the July moon. Before they parted both had acknowledged to their hearts an interest that might be a dearer tie than even that of brother and sister.

For a few weeks Harry Crowther was constantly coming with Archie to call on the Leslies, either for one pretext or another. Then he began to come by himself, and to come without any pretext at all. It had been long evident to Archie that Harry and Kate loved each other very dearly, and at last even the dim eyes of her grandfather began to perceive how matters stood.

"Kitty," he said, one night after waiting patiently through a "good-night" that lasted an hour and a half—"Kitty, why does Harry Crowther come here so often?"

"Because we do not believe in writing, grandfather. Love-letters once nearly cost me my life;" and leaning fondly on her grandfather's neck, Kitty told him the fault of which she had been guilty, and the pain and shame it had caused her.

"Never pays, 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 I try ask you to-morrow?"

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

"Oh yes."

"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 telegraphs in their place."

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

SAYS a French critic: "I like a girl before she gets womanish, and a woman before she gets girlish."

KATE FIELD says that if women had been born without tongues men would have been born without chins, and so things are right as they are.

"I am very much afraid of lightning," said a pretty lady. "And well you may be," replied a despairing lover, "as your heart is made of steel."

THE wife of a wealthy and retired grocer to her artistic dressmaker: "Dress me in such a manner that my vulgarities will pass for mediæval affectations."

ONE of the saddest and most vexatious trials that comes to a girl when she marries is that she has to discharge her mother and depend on a servant girl.

BASHFUL lover (to his belle): "Would that I had three kilograms of dynamite!" Belle: "Why, monsieur?" Bashful lover: "To break the ice between us."

AN Italian does not believe that she is loved by her lover unless he is capable of committing a crime for her, an Englishwoman extravagance, and a Frenchwoman a folly.

WHEN a fond parent finds that his little son has emulated the example of the father of his country in regard to arboriculture, he raises the wind immediately; that is to say, he puts the heir in motion.

A LADY tells something which ought to have remained a secret with her own sex. It is that a woman, in choosing a lover, considers a good deal more how the man will be regarded by other women than whether she loves him herself.

THE newest thing in high art, girls, is to paint your brother's pipe a delicate sky blue, with a cluster of lilies of the valley on the bowl. If you haven't got a brother's clay pipe, some other girl's brother's clay pipe will do as well, perhaps better.

A PORTION of the clergy oppose the bill to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister. These disciplinarians are possibly of the opinion that the man who marries twice, and is afflicted with but one mother-in-law, has more happiness here below than is good for him.

TENDER wife: Say, look here! I've got to have a new velvet skirt right off. Got to have it. This old thing is worn out—actually threadbare down the front. Brute of a husband: Just the thing, my dear. All the rage. Fashion item says velvet skirts will be very much worn this season. Sandpaper the back of your dress and you're setting the style.