

THE FREE LANCE.

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A COLLEGE ROMANCE.

The old courthouse clock was tolling the hour of midnight, but Harold Brown had no desire to shake off the reverie into which he had fallen. He lay in the veranda hammock until the sinking moon streamed through the lattice, tempering with a dreamy sweetness his recollection of days gone by, and thought.

“What a contrast between Flossie and Miss Fleming! Flossie, so innocent and childlike. Ha! ha! I used to think I loved her when we were children together. Miss Fleming—Hazel—such a charming, original girl!” And then his mind went off on a philosophical discussion about the broadening of the faculties and the outgrowing of childish fancies.

Less than a week ago he had spoken his love to Hazel Fleming. It happened one of those nights when the love-spirit makes all outdoors enchanted ground, and her dark beauty would have conquered even a stronger heart than Harold's. She had said “yes” —he remembered that so well, and now much of the uncertainty of his life was settled, or rather, about to begin. But in his quieter moments he tried to weigh the importance of his action. He loved to watch the rich color come and go in her expressive face, he loved to catch the flashes of her dark eyes and to hear the rippling laugh from those lips, yet somehow, somewhere, away down in the corner of his heart, he felt a longing which was not satisfied.

The Spring term of Harold Brown's Junior year in college was drawing to a close. Soon examinations were over, but Harold lingered two or three days at Montrose—it took so long to bid Hazel good-bye—and he did not reach home until the afternoon before the reception which Fenton yearly tenders to home-coming college students.