

that which these terms usually express of women. But all this was a far less powerful influence than the personality of the pretty, sunny-haired girl sitting two yards away, smiling her way deeper and deeper into his heart. Yes, he would have been proud of her as a sister, but his feelings towards her were scarcely those of a brother. Thinking thus now, he wondered if he had not had a feeling of brotherly proprietorship over her in the days of their quarrels and kisses. If he had, that feeling was painfully absent now, and in its place was an indescribable mingling of yearning and regret. The most potent influences of our lives are those which we acquire slowly, unconsciously. In the simplicity of a boyish fondness had been sown the seeds which, though choked with pride and buried beneath neglect, had only rooted themselves the deeper, and ere long Harold Brown was sensible of a tingling of life in that remote corner of his heart which Hazel Fleming had failed to reach. When he left the house every fibre of his passionate nature united in crying out: "What a fool I am!" for he realized that Flossie Ellington, the playmate of his earliest memory, had blossomed into a far rarer flower than Hazel Fleming.

"I can love her as a sister without being untrue to Hazel," he said to himself, and with this excuse he spent that happy summer's recreation mostly in Flossie's company. The thought of a possible injustice to Flossie did not present itself, for Harold was like other young men, seeking for his own amusement, regardless of the effect of his actions upon others, and often had felt the keen thrill of delight as he discovered, or thought he discovered, signs of a hidden secret in some maidenly heart.

Those delightful days, with their still more delightful evenings, soon sped into September, the time for return to college. One evening of his last week in Fenton, Harold was sitting on the Ellington veranda with Flossie, as he had done so often before, but this evening was important because he had only one more at home. We appreciate our pleasures most accurately when they are taken from us, and Harold, realizing that never again would he enjoy such companionship and intimacy with Flossie, felt a sadness that he could not conceal. Perhaps Flossie noticed this, perhaps she was thinking of something else, at least there was a gentleness in her manner, a softness in her words which was sweeter than the twilight, and to-night his heart told him that destiny had made them for each other. His engagement with Miss Fleming had grown out of a short period of admiration.