

others, our daily associates, even when in the same room with them. Mind-reading is not yet reduced to a science and if it were it would rob life of much of its romance, and there would be no more lovers' secrets, but whether the world would jog on as usual who knows? At any rate when the party broke up at a late hour, the minister offered to escort Rachel home (and though she had intended remaining to help Mrs. Fleming entertain her guests) she gladly accepted thinking it would be a relief to go home and be quite alone. Rachel lived with her grand-mother whom she knew would be fast asleep, and "I can think it all over and make up my mind how to bear it, for no living soul shall know how I have loved him from my childhood," she thought to herself, as she walked home beside the young minister. At home in her own chamber, she wept and prayed and struggled with herself to master the feelings she had always cherished for Harry, though he had made no promise when he went abroad, yet he kissed her good-bye, called her his sweetheart, and told her to write. How glad she was now that she had never written, how glad many a young girl would be if she had never penned the tell-tale messages, that have caused so much uneasiness, and sometimes serious difficulties when engagements have been broken.

The visitors at the mansion departed after New Year's, the days had been happily spent in the main, Rachel had been invited to participate in all the festivities, and had worn a smiling face and chatted and sang as usual, and she was present to say the farewell and, "to speed the parting guests." Squire Fleming had noticed the minister's preference and said to his wife that Rachel seemed pleased with his attentions, so little do men know from outward appearances how to judge womankind, especially in affairs of the heart.

After the holiday season Rachel shut herself in and was more quiet and reserved than ever; her grandma noticed that she no longer paid regular visits to the Flemings as she had always done for years, but she disliked questioning her, and yet she saw that she was troubled. It was the minister who enlightened the old lady at last. He came in one afternoon when Rachel had gone to see a friend, and grandma was alone in her easy parlor, she was a grand sort of woman with manners like a Duchess and the minister and the Squire were fond of her company for she kept posted on all the current topics of the day. Mr. Gillman was diffident, but he felt it a duty to speak to Mrs. Hilton about coming there so frequently, and he didn't want to be misunderstood. He had no great confidence in his powers of attraction, in fact was very modest about himself, but he was not willing to lose this opportunity. Mrs. Hilton you're not displeased with my coming here so often are you? Certainly not, I'm rather fond of young company and Rachel needs livening up, she's too much alone with me, I'm an old woman now that's very certain, and I'd like her to go to Utica and see her cousins for a few days, but she won't hear of it, I'm anxious about her health she grows paler and thinner every day."

The minister gathered courage at this and said, "Has it ever occurred to you that she's thinking of Harry Fleming?" "Yes, I've thought of it, I must acknowledge, but I'll never believe a girl with a drop of my blood in her veins

will pine after a man who slighted her, she's not that kind though I wouldn't say but, if he came home and asked her to be his wife she might say, yes." "But he's married already Mrs. Hilton." "Married, well what is it kept a secret for, is there any disgrace about it?" "I think not though Mrs. Fleming was dreadfully upset when the news came and she don't like to hear it spoken of, I heard the letter read." "So Harry is married, I'm not sorry for he wasn't good enough for Rachel, so that's what's troubling her, I'll pack her off to Utica tomorrow, Polly'll take care of me, she's waited on me these thirty years."

The young man blushing like a girl determined to speak now, "Mrs. Hilton would you object to my marrying Rachel, do you think she would accept me if I proposed to her, I've loved her ever since I first met her."

"Young girls, Mr. Gillman, like to be courted and I guess Rachel is not an exception in that respect, have you made love to her?"

"No I can't say that exactly, I've tried to let her see that I preferred her to every other young woman and I want to propose to her with your consent you're her guardian aren't you?" "I am all she has but she's of age and what she has, her legacy is her own, I've no legal right to control her, all I have will be hers when I'm gone, but she mustn't be over-persuaded to marry, just now to show people she's not pining for Harry Fleming; I'll take care of that."

"Rachel adores you, I've never seen such devotion in any young girl, its something sublime in her character," but here the conversation was interrupted the door opened and in walked Rachel, flushed with the walk, and perhaps with finding the young minister there. Nothing more was said on the subject and the minister bade them good evening early.

After the door closed behind him Mrs. Hilton questioned Rachel closely, and the girl longing to confide in some one told her the story, not even concealing the ardent love and sore disappointment, nor her own fears that she could never overcome it, grandma was puzzled she had not thought it so bad, and with her heart aching for the young girl, whom she loved more than any else on earth, they parted for the night. Long after Rachel was asleep grandma was busy with plans to make Rachel forget her trouble. She scarcely gave a thought to the young minister, he must do his own wooing and abide by the consequences, Life is full of these hy-plays, and sometimes they prove to be tragedies in earnest.

In the morning grandma told Rachel she had made up her mind to send her away for a few weeks and try what effect the change would have to bring her color back. "I can't see you growing more delicate day by day, once away from here and seeing new people you'll forget the pain you feel now."

Rachel was loth to go but she dreaded the minister proposing, and she felt she couldn't trust herself scarcely. She was afraid she might yield, if he should be persistent (though her grandma had never told her of their conversation,) and for this reason more than any other she consented to go. Arrangements were made for Squire Fleming to take her in his chaise to town where she could take the stage for Utica. Rachel

had gone before Mr. Gillman had mustered courage to speak his mind, it was easy to talk to her grandma, but when he was alone with her his heart failed, lest she should refuse him, and it should be a final ending of it all; he was not an adept in the art of love-making, evidently he felt too deeply.

The days and weeks went by and Rachel was still away, but when the summer was nearly over she was sent for in haste, Mrs. Hilton was seriously ill, and though nursed and tended by loving hands, she passed to the great beyond; but before her death she told Rachel of the minister's strong attachment for her, and advised her to accept him, for he was good, and upright and every inch a gentleman. Rachel made no promise, but she pondered over it; she knew things could not go on the same as before, now that grandma was gone. Squire Fleming offered Rachel a home with them, and his wife insisted upon her coming, and though they were dearer to her than any of her own kindred, she felt it would be impossible to accept of it under the circumstances.

After some mature deliberation she decided to go to Nesoburgh, where her father's sister lived, and she had sent a pressing invitation after hearing of Mrs. Hilton's death, to Rachel to come and spend the winter; she rather dreaded going, however, knowing her aunt was a very imperious sort of person, but it really seemed to be the only opening suitable. Rachel was so melancholy and alone in the world, that the minister could not from his point of view do anything that would look as though he had taken advantage of her lonely circumstances. He gave her his blessing at the Squire's gate when they parted, and told her he would write, but from her he asked nothing.

Rachel found herself in quite another atmosphere at her aunt's; the house was grander than any she had ever seen; there was always company of fashionable people; the dressing and style such as her aunt expected of her she could not endure; she often excused herself; her aunt called her proud, and was sometimes angry with her "for grieving over an old woman as she designated Mrs. Hilton, who had brought her up such a novice." That was too much for Rachel who truly revered her grandma's memory for she had been all the world to her, and she packed her trunks to go home unceremoniously; but meanwhile a letter came from Mr. Gillman that made her hesitate. It was decidedly grave and to the point, and Rachel felt she could not go home until she had carefully considered the offer of marriage it had contained. It was a genuine love letter, modest withal, but rather imperative, leaving her no alternative but "yes or no," in plain English.

Rachel was "in a manner speaking" quite independent with means of her own, and a great deal of tact, which is often better than talent, and she had many admirers, though she kept them all at a distance; the letter pleased and perplexed her, what she needed was good sound advice from a true friend.

She recalled her grandma's counsel to marry the young minister; and resolved at once to go to the Flemings; they were the nearest and dearest to whom she could apply, and it was only her pride, lest they should know the true state of her feeling, that stood in the way. She told her aunt she had received a busi-