



A WOMAN'S PLEA.

By L. G. MOBERLY.

H! yes, indeed it's very true
That I enjoy a walk with you,
But should I like it, if I tried
To walk life's pathway by your side?

I like to talk to you? Oh, yes,
Just for an hour perhaps, or less,
But should I like the whole day through
To have to talk to—only you?

It pleases me to see you? Well!
I own it does! But who can tell
If I should care to see your face
Daily—in one accustomed place?

Have patience with me! Do not smile—
Let me delay a little while—
You see, it means my whole, whole life,
If I consent to be—your—wife!

LAURELLA'S LOVE STORY.

By HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.

CHAPTER I.

"It's going to be a perfectly splendid day," exclaimed Laurella Lonsdale to herself, as gleefully throwing open her bedroom window she drank in long draughts of sweet moorland air. And I shall see him, was the unspoken thought which brought the happy smile to her lip, and a richer colour to her cheek, as her eye fell on the smart tweed gown which she had herself laid in readiness for wear the night before.

A week or two previously to the close of the London season Laurella Lonsdale had, to the entire satisfaction of the respective fathers accepted as her future husband a certain Charlie Cameron, son and heir of Sir Cosmo Cameron of Fellfoot. She had therefore hailed with secret delight the invitation of her friend and former schoolfellow, Miss Garth, to pay an autumn visit to Beckside, well aware of its proximity to Fellfoot, where at that season of the year the Camerons were in the habit of entertaining a large shooting-party. On her arrival at Beckside on the preceding evening Laurella had been informed by her friends that a luncheon party at their neighbour Sir Cosmo Cameron's shooting hut, on the moor was, weather permitting, in the next day's programme.

Christie and Sybil Garth had often expatiated on the delights of these informal picnics, when they would walk or drive up the fells and help to prepare luncheon in the roomy hut built for the purpose by the side of a stream, evidently regarding it as a pet pleasure, but this was Laurella's first experience of anything of the kind.

She had not long been released from a protracted school life, the only change from which had been the quiet, seaside holidays spent with an invalid aunt. Her father, General Lonsdale had, on finally retiring from active service, taken a house in London, indulging the hope that he might at last enjoy the society of his only and dearly-loved child, of whom he had hitherto seen so little, without giving up that of his military cronies who

haunted the clubs. But this was not to be, and the old soldier soon saw that his hope of ending his days in the domestic life he had so often pictured to himself was doomed to disappointment; six months had barely passed ere he was asked to surrender his treasure into another man's keeping.

Sir Cosmo Cameron had, however, been a school-fellow and brother-in-arms of his own, and though he knew little personally of his old friend's son, the attractive appearance and manners of the latter, together with his father's fond pride in him, were in his favour, and the old man felt that if he must indeed give up his daughter, he could desire nothing better than to seal the life-long friendship of the fathers by the union of the children.

It was a prospect of surpassing beauty on which the Garth family, gathered round the wide windows of the breakfast-room were gazing, when Laurella joined them.

"Here you are, Laurel; it is going to be a glorious day," exclaimed Christie Garth coming forward to greet her friend.

"Guy has been away to the moors this hour or more," added Sybil, bestowing a glance of smiling approval on Laurel's appearance. A light blue haze hung over the fells on the further side of the beck, but it was being rapidly dispersed by the warm sunshine. One after another the heather-covered hills shone out in their soft violet beauty, and the amber-coloured waters of the beck at the foot of the garden flashed and sparkled through the trees as the sun rose higher.

"How lovely it is, and how delicious it smells," exclaimed Laurella, drinking in long breaths of the fresh wind, laden with the scent of wild thyme, which stirred the window curtains as the merry party seated themselves round the breakfast table. A delightful hour of chat with Christie followed the leisurely meal, and Laurella poured her happy love-tale into her friend's sympathetic ears as the two strolled arm in arm along the terraced paths of the steep sunny garden, and received her loving, if somewhat surprised congratulations in return.

"I suppose you know you will meet Mr. Cameron and his father to-day," observed Christie. "Indeed, the shooting hut is Sir Cosmo's, though for our joint convenience it is built on the boundary line of the two properties."

A glance at Laurella's face convinced Christie that her companion was perfectly aware of this fact.

"I suspect you know more about it all than I can tell you, you demure puss!" she laughed with a loving squeeze of the arm within her own. "There, be off, and put on your hat: the pony-carriage will be round in five minutes."

There was no happier girl in the world than Laurella Lonsdale, as seated beside Mrs. Garth in the roomy pony-carriage, with Christie opposite to her, they bowed along the breezy road which wound round the hill-side to the moor. The sturdy cob was accustomed to his work and needed no urging. As Christie regarded the sweet face of her friend, a shade of anxiety mingled with the admiration on her own.

"Can she know? Can her father know?" she asked herself. "She is so thoroughly good and high-principled, her standard of men has always been so high. I have felt assured she would be so difficult to win; I wish we had had a hint of this matter sooner. Mother might have said a word of warning to the General, but it is too late now."

The *rhinoceros* was soon reached, Sybil was already there, she had started on foot immediately after breakfast, and was resting on a royal couch of honey-scented heather, in the shadow of the hut.

"I have heard the guns once or twice, not so very far distant," she said as she led off Jock to a lean-to shed of his own at the back of the hut, "so the sooner we commence operations the better."

Abundance of provisions, together with a sufficient supply of articles needful for the comfortable consumption of the same had been placed on the long deal table by the groom, and the girls gaily proceeded to lay