

**CIHM  
Microfiche  
Series  
(Monographs)**

**ICMH  
Collection de  
microfiches  
(monographies)**



**Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions / Institut canadien de microreproductions historiques**

**© 1994**



The copy filmed here has been reproduced thanks to the generosity of:

National Library of Canada

L'exemplaire filmé fut reproduit grâce à la générosité de:

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

The images appearing here are the best quality possible considering the condition and legibility of the original copy and in keeping with the filming contract specifications.

Les images suivantes ont été reproduites avec le plus grand soin, compte tenu de la condition et de la netteté de l'exemplaire filmé, et en conformité avec les conditions du contrat de filmage.

Original copies in printed paper covers are filmed beginning with the front cover and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression, or the back cover when appropriate. All other original copies are filmed beginning on the first page with a printed or illustrated impression, and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression.

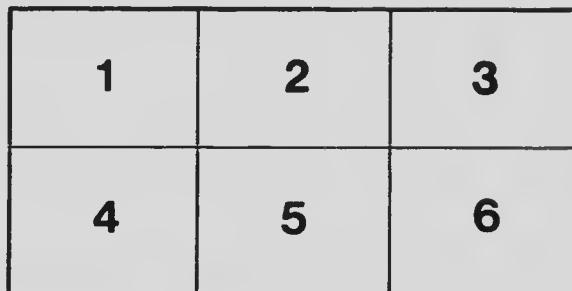
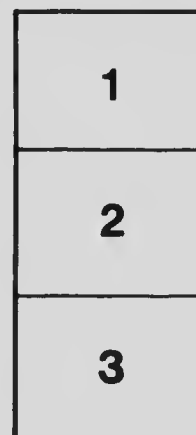
Les exemplaires originaux dont la couverture en papier est imprimée sont filmés en commençant par le premier plat et en terminant soit par la dernière page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration, soit par le second plat, selon le cas. Tous les autres exemplaires originaux sont filmés en commençant par la première page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration et en terminant par la dernière page qui comporte une telle empreinte.

The last recorded frame on each microfiche shall contain the symbol  $\rightarrow$  (meaning "CONTINUED"), or the symbol  $\nabla$  (meaning "END"), whichever applies.

Un des symboles suivants apparaîtra sur la dernière image de chaque microfiche, selon le cas: le symbole  $\rightarrow$  signifie "A SUIVRE", le symbole  $\nabla$  signifie "FIN".

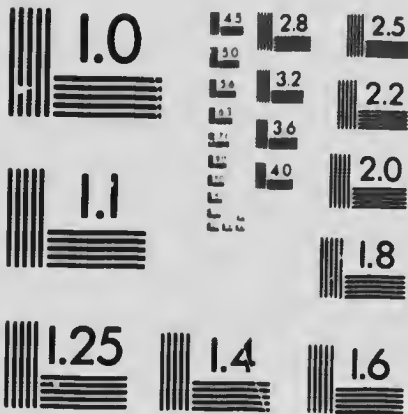
Maps, plates, charts, etc., may be filmed at different reduction ratios. Those too large to be entirely included in one exposure are filmed beginning in the upper left hand corner, left to right and top to bottom, as many frames as required. The following diagrams illustrate the method:

Les cartes, planches, tableaux, etc., peuvent être filmés à des taux de réduction différents. Lorsque le document est trop grand pour être reproduit en un seul cliché, il est filmé à partir de l'angle supérieur gauche, de gauche à droite, et de haut en bas, en prenant le nombre d'images nécessaire. Les diagrammes suivants illustrent la méthode.



# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



**APPLIED IMAGE Inc**

1653 East Main Street  
Rochester, New York 14609 USA  
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone  
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

1971

# LOVE FOR LOVE'S SAKE.

BY HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.

## CHAPTER I.

"So that is over."

A strange remark for a girl to make after reading a letter informing her that the man to whom she has been for some years engaged is about to marry another!

For a moment her eyes had flashed with anger, and the hot blood of wounded pride had mounted into her cheeks, but after a few minute's reflection Veronica Hamilton had to confess to herself that she was not heartbroken by the humiliating desertion of her recreant lover.

She was lying back in a hammock-chair on the roof of a homely, picturesque boarding-house amongst the Surrey hills; to the left, the purple Blackdown was quickly melting into the twilight; to the right, white-tented Aldershot nestled in its shallow valley, whilst facing her and touching her glory of red-gold hair with caressing fingers flamed the rosy fires of the sunset.

Many people had owned to being startled when Veronica raised her eyes, so often veiled by their long black lashes. One would naturally expect to meet a pair of blue, or, possibly, light hazel orbs, with hair of that color and a complexion like the most delicately-tinted sea shell, but hers were of the darkest, most velvety brown, with clear golden lights in them, from which the sparkle of fun or glow of feeling was seldom absent. They were soft and liquid now, as if with unshed tears, as they gazed dreamily away to where a great luminous start trembled out in a belt of faint rose color above the fading crimson of the sunset.

Once more she read the letter through in the gathering dusk. It was not long, and this time her lip curled slightly as she came to the end.

"Dear Vera (it ran).—I have long been aware that our affection was not mutual, not equal, that you never gave me your whole heart, as I in the old days gave mine to you; you only accepted me because my late guardian, your poor father, desired it, and you cared for no one else. Vera, you should have married me long ago, when I desired it, instead of putting me off and letting me see that the exactions of my love wearied you. True, you gave me your word to marry me one day, and I know that sooner or later you would have kept it, but an unwilling, or at best a lukewarm bride, my sweet cousin, does not satisfy a man with warm affections like mine. You chilled and repulsed me, and now it should not surprise you very much that I am writing to give you back the promise you made me in your father's presence years ago, and to tell you that I am engaged to a beautiful and warm-hearted girl, who loves me as I desire to be loved,

I B.

and to whom I hope to be united in a few weeks. You know her, Vera—it is Isabel Vincent, and she and I both hope that you will consider us your friends, as you and I are still cousins. And I need scarcely add that should the independent spirit I have so much deplored in you permit of your doing so, I desire you to remember that I shall always be glad and willing to give you all cousinly aid when you need such. I know you will wish me every happiness in my approaching marriage, and beg you to regard me, dear Vera, as

"Your always warmly-attached cousin,  
"Geoffrey Hamilton."

"So that is over!" the girl repeated, as she slowly tore the letter across and across into the tiniest shreds; then gathering them up she walked to the railing protecting the edges of the roof and scattered them down into the bracken and ling which grew close up to the back of the house.

"Hallo, there! Somebody seems to be raising a snowstorm, or are we going to have a ghostly paper chase?" called out a mellow young voice below, and, somewhat startled, Vera retreated to her chair.

"Some stranger must have arrived," she thought, "but surely I have heard that voice, or one precisely like it, before." And then slowly from the background of her memory grew out a face in connection with that voice—he ruddy, boyish face of a young cadet whom she had met some three or four years previously when sojourning with her father at Zermatt, whose open and evident devotion to the beautiful heiress, Miss Hamilton, had been the cause of much secret amusement among the residents of the great hotel.

"I must be mistaken" she said to herself; "it cannot be that nice Campbell boy, whom Geoffrey disliked so much. What a dear boy he was, and what a handsome, proud mother he had! How well I remember how I used to rage at the impertinent implications of her tone and manner when she perpetually discoursed on the grand match she intended her son to make, and recounted to various gifts and perfections that must belong to the future bride of 'a Campbell of Argyle.' How she mouthed that out! I wonder if Master Robin—yes, I am sure Robin was his name—has found his paragon yet? I fancy he would make his own choice, in spite of his lady mother."

Then, clasping her hands under her head, Veronica let her thoughts drift back far into the past, as she sat on while the soft summer's twilight encircled her more closely.

The only child of a wealthy, intellectual and somewhat hypochondriac coun-

try gentleman, she had never been separated from her father until the day of his death about a year previously; they had been everything to each other. Her mother had died at her birth, but so perfect had been the companionship between father and daughter that Vera had never missed a mother's care. Together they had studied and read and travelled, spending the greater part of the years peacefully and in full content at their beautiful home in the north of England.

Suddenly Mr. Hamilton appeared to grow anxious about the future of his daughter. He had a weak heart, and became subject to attacks of pain and breathlessness, and it was after one of these that he urged Veronica to accept the hand of her cousin (who was also his ward), Geoffrey Hamilton, who had, metaphorically speaking, from boyhood cast himself at her feet. Having no recognized home, his vacations had nearly always been passed with his uncle, and frequently also he had been their traveling companion. Geoffrey, handsome, talented and impulsive, fancied himself to be in love with his cousin, who on her part refused to take his protestations seriously. She had, however, a warm, cousinly affection for him, and seeing her father had set his heart upon it, she made no objection to the engagement, but she obstinately refused to go any further than this. They were both so young, she said, and it would be quite time enough to talk of marriage in a few years' time.

Geoffrey always showed himself at his best when with Vera and his guardian, and the latter had formed, on a very superficial knowledge, a high opinion of the young fellow's character; he knew nothing of the fickle, pleasure-loving, extravagant nature that lurked under that pleasant exterior, and little dreamed that Geoffrey had already debts which would swallow up nearly the whole of the small carefully invested fortune which he was to hand over to his nephew on his twenty-fifth birthday. He was feverishly anxious for the engagement to take place, and the consins had plighted their troth in his presence, when, weak and suffering, he had requested them to do so.

It never occurred to Vera in those days that her reluctance to marry her cousin arose from want of love for him. She was very fond of Geoffrey, she told herself; he was a delightful companion, and so devoted to her, but somehow his demonstrative affection repulsed, bored and wearied her; poor Geoffrey certainly did not prosper in his lovemaking, and had it not happened that they saw little of each other after the engagement took place she must have found out that in truth she had nothing but cousinly affection to bestow on him.

Contented with the disposal of her future, Mr. Hamilton, occupied with his failing health, and some secret anxiety which always seemed to be preying on his mind, was only too glad to keep his daughter with him—things would work out all right when the time came, he said to himself.

They were at St. Malo when the end came. Mr. Hamilton had died quite suddenly from failure of the heart on the eve of their departure for home a year ago. Geoffrey had hastened to his broken-hearted cousin and performed the sad duties that devolved upon him with the utmost kindness and consideration, and then, touched by her sorrow and loneliness, once more in his impulsive fashion entreated her to marry him at once and give him the right to comfort and care for her. But she would only give him her word to do this when the period of mourning for her father should be over, so, having laid the remains of his uncle to rest in the beautiful hillside cemetery of his northern home, Geoffrey reluctantly, and with some natural pique, left his bride-elect to live out the lonely months of mourning as she desired.

A week or two later a second blow fell upon Vera, which explained the apparently causeless anxiety and uneasiness displayed by her father during the last years of his life. The family lawyer, in whose hands had always lain the conduct of their affairs, wrote to convey to her the astounding intelligence that the fortune, which, together with their beloved and beautiful house, had been left unreservedly to herself, practically did not exist. On looking into affairs it was discovered that, in the hope of increasing his daughter's wealth, Mr. Hamilton had for some years past speculated in mining shares. He was no business man, and little by little his capital had melted away. There were liabilities, too, which involved the sale of the estate, and, when all was settled, poor Vera, instead of being a considerable heiress, found herself the possessor only of a small sum, representing some sixty pounds a year.

Geoffrey's fortune was, however, safe; his uncle had taken good care of that, and, on learning the state of affairs, he wrote a kind and cousinly letter of sympathy, concluding with a vague offer of assistance, should she need it, but, rather to Vera's surprise, made no further suggestion of immediate marriage.

Veronica Hamilton was not the nature to be crushed by this kind of misfortune. In losing her father she felt the worst had happened that could befall her, and the subsequent loss of home and wealth did not come upon her as an unbearable blow. On the contrary, it stung her into the salutary necessity of exerting herself.

"My darling father gave me a fortune in my education," she said to the sympathetic old lawyer. "Every talent I possess has been developed and trained to the utmost. I shall have no difficulty in earning an independence, and, although I have always had plenty of money to spend, my tastes are simple."

And, losing no time in making inquiries, Vera found herself, within three months of her father's death, in the position of daily governess and companion to the motherless daughter of a gentleman living in the neighborhood, almost within

sight of the pleasant, homely boarding-house in which she had made her home. Long ago she had spent a few days at the Moor House with her father, and it had seemed to her then such a pleasant resting-place that she at once sought it out when circumstances obliged her to find a room near The Brackens, where her pupil resided, and, except for the abiding sorrow of her loss, it was not an unhappy or unsatisfactory life. Geoffry she had not seen for many months, and the gradual falling off in his letters had exused her no uneasiness.

While sitting thus plunged into deep reverie, occasional sounds floated up to her from the guests, of whom, at this season, the house was full, as they strolled in the garden below. Someone was singing in the drawing-room, and she caught the refrain of a popular love song:—

"When trouble or sorrow life's sky o'er-casts,  
Love for love's sake is the love that lasts."

—repeated over and over again.  
"Quite true," she commented half aloud. "That is my own opinion, but not yours, my good Cousin Geoffry certainly not yours!"

Then she sprang up, and, folding her hammock-chair, placed it in the shelter, and went down the steep steps to her own bedroom—a comfortable one enough, long and low, with a wide casement window filling up the further end, and made pretty and dainty by various belongings brought from her own home—chiefly her father's gifts. Crossing the room to pull down the blinds before lighting her candle, she caught sight of a tall figure still pacing the little drive, and the same mellow voice she had heard earlier in the evening rolled out the haunting refrain of the song she had lately listened to:—

"When trouble or sorrow life's sky o'er-casts,  
Love for love's sake is the love that lasts."

## CHAPTER II.

On slipping into the seat beside her friendly hostess at the breakfast table next morning, which had grown to be hers by right of occupation, Veronica found a note beside her plate addressed to her in the sprawling handwriting of her pupil, Molly Innis:—"Father says I am to have a holiday to-morrow, that I may be with my aunt and cousin, who have arrived this evening," wrote the girl, "and the next day is Sunday, so please, dear Miss Hamilton, do not come till Monday. I can imagine your happiness in getting rid of your plague for two whole days!"

"Your letter was brought by a groom from The Brackens, Miss Hamilton," remarked Miss Marten. "Some guests arrived there last night, and I am to accommodate one of them."

"My pupil speaks of the arrival of an aunt and cousin," returned Vera; "she was full of it yesterday, and she is to have a holiday in their honor. Well, it is such a lovely day, I shall enjoy a holi-

day, too, with my sketch-book for a companion," and then she glanced up and down the long table. "I fancied you had some new arrivals last night, and expected to see fresh faces this morning," she added in a lower tone.

"No, but a young nephew of Sir James Innis' is to have a bed here for a few nights," replied Miss Marten, "they cannot put him up at The Brackens. It is a small house, you know, and he slept at the inn last night. We shall see nothing of him."

"I must have been mistaken, then," said Vera. "I certainly thought I heard a new voice. Well, I will be off before it is too hot, and have a long morning's sketching."

And collecting her materials, Vera soon afterwards mounted her bicycle and set out on an expedition of some miles. The immediate neighborhood of Firholt, beautiful as it undoubtedly was, did not appear to be very printable, even to an amateur of Vera's skill. Scrappy "bits" abounded, graceful groups of lady birches and tall Scotch firs, with backgrounds of moor and hill in the fairest, most glowing tints of heather color, violet distances of hill beyond hill, picturesque cottages, pools, and brown-faced rustics, and above all, glorious sunsets. Vera had revelled in these ever since her arrival, and her sketch-books were full of them. "The distances hereabouts are perfect," a wandering artist had observed to her, "and one can get delicious detached bits of foreground, too, but somehow one fails in getting them together for a landscape of any extent." And then he had spoken of a place some miles off where he had painted a successful picture for the Academy, and it was this spot which Vera had now made up her mind to visit.

She was a fearless and graceful rider, and made a pretty picture herself as she flew along in the clear golden sunlight, turning her head from side to side, with keen enjoyment and artistic appreciation of the new beauties that came into view at every turn of the long white road. At length she left the long valley behind her, and exclaimed admiringly at the loveliness of the scene that now presented itself, wood, water, hill and valley, with here and there a red-roofed farmhouse, and everywhere the bracken and gorgeous masses of heather in full bloom. The girl gave a long sigh of satisfaction as she pushed her machine up a slight incline, and, seating herself in a comfortable nook in the grateful shadow of some giant firs, prepared for a busy morning of work.

So absorbed was she in her fascinating occupation that more than two hours elapsed before she became conscious of anything else; a cloud passing over the sun obliged her to pause for a minute, and then a carriage driving along the road roused her attention, for she recognized it as belonging to The Brackens, and Molly Innis, seated beside an elderly lady, was frantically waving to her. Smilingly acknowledging the greeting, Vera consulted her watch. It was much later than she had imagined, and with a longing look at her almost completed sketch,



she gathered up her belongings, and was placing them in the basket attached to her bicycle, when another machine whirled into sight, enveloped in a cloud of dust.

"I will let this rider pass before I get under weigh," she thought, "or I shall be smothered," and then as she stood aside on the grass, ready to mount, it struck her that there was something familiar in the face and figure of the approaching cyclist, a tall young man in light tweeds and a straw hat, with a fair, handsome, sunburnt face. He glanced at Vera with startled curiosity, seeming unable to withdraw his eyes, while his face flushed with surprise under its tan; then he half stopped his machine, and hesitatingly took off his hat.

"I was not mistaken; it is really Robin Campbell," said Vera to herself, as she gracefully returned the young man's bow. "And he evidently recognizes me," but she immediately turned away, and became intent on adjusting her sketch-book, and Robin, feeling no encouragement to stop and speak, rode off with a somewhat disappointed air.

"Now, what has brought Master Robin here? How well I remember him! I wonder if he is as nice as he used to be!" she thought, as, carefully keeping her distance, she sped in the same direction.

Having reached the Moor House just in time for luncheon, Vera ran upstairs, and her thoughts were still busy with the past, when, on emerging from her room, another door was hastily flung open at the opposite end of the corridor, and Mr. Campbell himself strode towards her. Meeting thus face to face, it was impossible to ignore the old acquaintance, and she held out her hand with a smile.

"Then it is really you!" he exclaimed eagerly but with slight confusion, as if at a loss how to address her. "I felt I could not be mistaken just now, unexpected as the meeting was, but I was not quite sure at first that you recognized me—that you desired to renew our old acquaintance," he stammered, keeping her hand unconsciously in his warm grasp, and gazing with frank, wistful eyes that glowed with delight.

"Oh, yes, I knew you!" replied Vera, smilingly withdrawing her hand. "How is it that I find you at the Moor House, Mr. Campbell?"

"I came down with my mother—you remember my mother?—last night," he returned. "We are looking for a house in this neighborhood. We have been to see one this morning. My mother is staying at The Brackens, a house near this. I am off there now to luncheon, but they can't put me up at night, so Miss Marten gives me a room. And you? You are staying here?"

"I am living here. I am governess to Sir James Innis' daughter," said Vera, calmly. "But you will be late at The Brackens, and we shall no doubt meet again," and she dismissed him with a friendly little nod of farewell as she entered the dining-room, unable to help smiling at his bewildered expression as he stared after her.

"Vera Hamilton—my Miss Hamilton, if she be still unmarried—my cousin Molly's governess!" Robin was muttering to himself as he flew along the white road that divided the Moor House from The Brackens. "What an inconceivable turn of fortune's wheel! Why, her father was as rich as Croesus, and that cousin—that stand-off Hamilton fellow she was engaged to— Well, I must pump Moll about this. What will the num say?"

Vera did not seek her retreat on the roof that evening. She was free to join the house party or not as she pleased, and sometimes, when any specially pleasant or interesting inmate tempted her, or when one of the musical or dramatic evenings so frequently got up by the visitors took place, she remained in the drawing-room, but as she had the choice of two or three pleasant retreats where she could enjoy privacy and feel herself at home, she, as a rule, preferred a book and her own society.

This evening, however, she felt socially inclined, and, though she did not confess it even to herself, she felt an inward conviction that the day would not come to an end without her seeing more of her quondam admirer. In this she was not mistaken, for it was still early when, with a laughing apology to his hostess for putting in an unauthorized appearance, the young gentleman walked into the midst of the group assembled round the porch, teacups in hand, and, quickly finding out Vera, who was seated a little withdrawn from the rest, he placed a chair for himself by her side.

The pumping process to which he had subjected his cousin Molly had not elicited much information, but enough to give him the lead he wanted. Her governess was certainly Miss, and not Mrs., Hamilton, the little girl declared. She had lately lost her father, and Molly thought she had once been rich. But had Robin actually seen her?—and did he not think her very, very beautiful? She—Molly—thought Miss Hamilton the most beautiful and accomplished person she had ever met, not excepting Robin himself. Her father had told her she was a perfect lady, and he wished Molly to become as much like her as possible, and so on, till it became evident to her listener that his little cousin cherished a profound admiration and affection for her young preceptor, which raised her very much in his opinion.

"I wonder if you know how glad, how very glad I am, to meet you again, Miss Hamilton, in spite of the sadness of the circumstances that have brought us together?" he began, as he glanced sympathetically at her black gown. "Often as I tried, when at home, I have never been able to hear anything of you."

"It is kind of you to be so glad," returned Vera in a low voice. "There have indeed been sad changes since we parted at Zermatt. I had no idea that my employer was your uncle. But then, you know, I have scarcely ever spoken to him. He is much away, and when at home we seldom meet."

"Sir James is my mother's brother, but we have seen very little of each other," said Robin. "We are only here now because, on account of her health, my mother is advised to make her home in this neighborhood, and my uncle offered to put her up until we can find a house. I ran down to help her in the search, and settle her in. I am due back in Africa in six or eight weeks from now."

An odd blank feeling came over Vera as she heard this, but Robin went on.

"Do you know, a sudden vivid remembrance of you came over me last evening, when I looked in to interview Miss Marten. I could not understand it then, but I do now. I must have felt you near me, for I am quite certain I did not see you or hear your name mentioned."

"I was upstairs," said Vera, in a slightly embarrassed tone, for one or two people were regarding her and her companion rather curiously. "Hush," she added with a warning gesture, "someone is singing."

By the time the music was over good-nights were being said, and with a general bow that included Robin, Vera went into the house, but not before he had found an opportunity to whisper, "I thought of you all the time that song was being sung last night. I waited outside till it was ended."

"He is just the same charming boy that he used to be, nicer, if anything," said Vera to herself, as she laid her head on her pillow. "I must be careful, or Master Robin will get me into hot water. Heigho! I wonder if Geoffrey ever had that sort of intuition of my nearness. I fancy not."

Master Robin, on his part, as he paced the garden paths and drank in the cool, dewy fragrance of the breeze that rustled the branches of the trees, was thinking, "She is unchanged, my beautiful Vera, more beautiful than ever. The only girl in the world for me, and she is free; she must be free. What can have become of that Hamilton fellow, though?" and Robin kicked a stone aside rather viciously. "How I used to detest him, and I always had an idea she didn't care much for him, either; it was her father's doing. God grant I get hack safe from Africa again this time, and I may still have a chance. Circumstances have changed, and the pull is on my side now that poor George's death has made me Uncle Campbell's heir. That's as it ought to be, but the mum would object. By the way, I must let her and Uncle James know that Miss Hamilton is an old acquaintance. It would only complicate matters to make a secret of that," thought the simple young fellow, as he betook himself to his room, happy in the knowledge that he was resting beneath the same roof as the lady of his honest affections.

"Mother," he began, as he sat beside her at the breakfast table on Sunday morning. "I have made a discovery. The lady who comes here every day to teach Molly, and who lives at the Moor House,

is the same Miss Hamilton we met years ago, when she was staying at Zermatt with her father. We recognized each other yesterday. I hope you will call on her."

"Call upon Molly's governess, upon that Miss Hamilton! You are dreaming, Robin! I am sure I shall do no such thing," exclaimed Mrs. Campbell, hastily putting down her coffee cup. "You remember I did not like the girl. I always thought her presuming and inclined to be forward with young men, although she was said to be engaged. Besides Molly's governess cannot be that Miss Hamilton. Her father was a wealthy man, and she would have no need to earn her bread."

"Are you speaking of Molly's lady companion?" put in Sir James. "Did you say you know her, Robin? Then let me tell you you know a most admirable and accomplished young lady, whose acquaintance is an honor to anyone."

"But, my dear James—" began Mrs. Campbell.

"But, my dear Mary," mimicked her brother, "I know all about Miss Hamilton. Believe me that in a matter so important to my little girl, I did not act in the dark. I knew the young lady's father at one time, though she is probably not aware of the fact. Her family is as good as our own. She suffered a great calamity in the loss of wealth and position after her father's death, but she is, I believe, engaged to a cousin of the same name as her own."

"Why has he not married her, then?"

"That I cannot tell you. I am not even certain that the engagement still exists. I can only assure you that I consider myself highly fortunate in having secured her for Molly," he went on, in his slightly pompous fashion. "By all means call upon Miss Hamilton, Mary; it would be a most kind and proper attention on your part. Now, I think of it, I will take the opportunity of your presence in my house to ask her to dinner, and she and Molly may as well take their luncheon with us during your stay, instead of in the morning room, as at present." And having delivered himself of this—for him—long speech, her host cut short the discussion by leaving the room, closely followed by his nephew.

Robin was at once gratified and discomfited by what he had heard. "What can that fellow be thinking of to let her teach, if they are still engaged?" he muttered, digging his fist into the crown of his straw hat and knocking the walking-sticks about irritably as he selected his own, for somehow Robin always wanted to kick or knock something about when he thought of Geoffrey Hamilton. "After all, I don't believe it, I can't believe it, and I'll try my luck all the same," he continued manfully. "Uncle James will be on my side; there'll only be the mum, but there's Africa first," and the brave young Lieutenant of the Devonshires stifled a sigh. He was only home on sick leave for a few months, and he knew—none better—the futility in those days of looking beyond Africa with any degree of certainty.

### CHAPTER III

When the congregation streamed out of the picturesque little parish church of Firholt, which, like most buildings in the neighborhood, stood on a clearing in the pine woods, Vera endeavored to avoid the family from The Brackens, with the intention of walking home by herself, instead of joining Molly, as she was accustomed to do when her pupil was alone. But Molly, all anxiety to introduce the beloved Miss Hamilton to her aunt, ran after and detained her, till the other members of the party came up, and seeing Sir James' courteous greeting and Robin's eager one, Mrs. Campbell perforce held out a reluctant hand, and acknowledged a previous acquaintance with cold civility. Sir James further insisted that Vera should take the vicant seat in the carriage as far as the Moor House. It was so hot and dusty by the road, he said, and he and Robin were going to walk through the woods, which was out of Miss Hamilton's way, and he handed the three ladies into the landau, and shut the door upon them without further ado, but in spite of Molly's affectionate chatter, her aunt's lack of cordiality was so marked that Vera felt thankful that the drive was of short duration, and as she alighted at her own gate she determined that for the remainder of Mrs. Campbell's visit she would keep carefully out of her way.

But Sir James Innis had decreed otherwise.

"Having unfortunately no lady at the head of my household," he remarked to his nephew, as they walked leisurely homewards through the cool green gloom of the woods, "I have refrained from any personal intercourse with Miss Hamilton. One cannot be too careful, under the circumstances in which we are relatively placed, but I have not been unkindful of her, and my good friend Miss Marten has strict injunctions to look after the young lady and make her thoroughly comfortable. Now, however, your mother's visit gives me the opportunity of showing her a little attention, and I am anxious to avail myself of it."

Consequently, when Robin came down to the Moor House that evening, he was the bearer of a polite note from his uncle begging Miss Hamilton to dine at The Brackens at an early date. He was much disappointed at not being able to deliver this in person, but Vera, according to her invariable practice after the Sunday evening meal, had already retired to read in quiet, and after smoking several disconsolate cigarettes, Robin was forced to hand over the note to Miss Marten's care.

He had, however, learnt from Molly—convenient Molly—the hour at which her governess usually appeared, and Vera had scarcely left the Moor House premises on the following morning when she found the young gentleman and his bicycle at her side.

"You are so difficult to get at, Miss Hamilton," he began in an injured tone. "I came down early last night in the hope of securing a chat with you, but you were nowhere to be found."

"I do not always join the visitors of an evening," she replied, "and never on a Sunday. Sometimes it amuses and interests me to do so, but this is my home, you must remember, and one likes to be alone now and then. It is fatiguing to live always in public."

"Have you a sitting-room of your own, a room where you can receive visitors for instance?" he asked eagerly.

"No, I do not require a private sitting-room," replied Vera, smiling. "I am, as a rule, only here of an evening, and, besides, there is no one to visit me."

"Where do you hide yourself then?"

"Oh, I have my secret retreats, but you do not suppose I am going to divulge them to you, Mr. Campbell," she returned lightly, smiling at the lad's discomfited face. "But now tell me what you have been doing with yourself all this time—four years, is it not, since we parted at Zermatt? You had just passed your last Sandhurst examination then?"

"You remember that?" exclaimed Robin with a gratified glance. "Yes, I was ordered to Egypt almost directly after being gazetted to my regiment. We put in a first-rate time there, and I came through the Omdurman show all right, and was expecting to get home for a bit, and trot the mum off somewhere—she wasn't very fit that year—when the South African row began, and we were ordered straight off to the Cape."

"You have seen service in Africa, too, then?"

"Yes, most of my regiment got pretty sick of it. I was in Ladysmith all the time of the siege," added Robin in a lower tone.

"Were you, indeed?" and Vera glanced at the bronzed young face with a new interest. "You were not wounded?"

"No, I was on the sick list at the time, a sharp touch of fever, you know, and a fellow hadn't much chance to pull round there, so as soon as possible after we were relieved I was shipped home on sick leave."

"You are well now?"

"Oh, yes, as fit as ever, and keen to get back to the front."

"It is hard on your mother," said Vera. "What a life of anxiety she must lead on your behalf."

"Poor old mum! Yes, it is rough on her. She was a soldier's wife, you know, before she was a soldier's mother."

"Poor mothers and wives!" murmured Vera. "How they suffer."

The young soldier regarded her wistfully.

"Shall you consult the casualty list on my account when I go back?" he asked with a laugh. "Will you care if I am knocked over by a Boer bullet?" But, in spite of the laugh, his voice shook a little over the words.

"Indeed I shall," she returned heartily. "Oh, I hope, I hope you will come back safely. But see, here is Molly watching for me. Good morning, Mr. Campbell—" and, breaking off the conversation somewhat abruptly, she turned into the drive with her young pupil.

Vera could not understand the feelings that took possession of her at the

thought of the suffering this cheery young fellow had already endured, and what he might yet have to encounter. She was filled with sick horror, and her knees trembled under her at the picture his words had conjured up, of the strong, comely figure lying wounded and suffering on some blazing South African veldt or hillside, as she had read of so many doing, and she longed with a passionate longing to keep back just this one young life, to snatch him from the fate that had overtaken those others.

"I am sure I do not know why I should feel so about him," she said to herself. "I suppose it is because he is the first of our South African soldiers I have actually known, and then, of course, he really is a dear boy. I have always liked him, and one does not like to think of one's friends being in danger," and Vera pulled herself together, and lent an intelligent ear to Molly's chatter.

"We are to have luncheon in the dining-room with the others as long as my aunt and cousin remain with us," she was saying.

"Indeed, why is that, Molly?"

"Father wishes it, if you do not mind. Miss Hamilton, dear. He likes seeing something of us, he says, and Robin likes it, too, but I don't fancy Aunt Mary does much," continued the child with a pout. She said something about keeping people in their proper places, but I'm sure I don't know where my proper place is, if not with my own dear father," and Molly tossed her head indignantly.

"Well, well, you needn't ruffle up your feathers like a little turkey-cock," said Vera, laughing, and stroking the little girl's hair with a soothing hand. "It is evident that Mrs. Campbell thinks my proper place is not in her company," she thought. "How very unlike people of the same family can be to each other!"

Hitherto Vera's intercourse with the household at The Brackens had been confined to Molly, but she now found herself drawn into the home circle as one of themselves, treated with the utmost courtesy and consideration by Sir James, and by Molly and Robin in the affectionate intimacy of a friend and playfellow. Strict rules with regard to study were for the present relaxed, for, as her father observed, Molly had not yet had any regular summer holidays. The young people therefore led an almost entirely out-of-door life, and, except when Robin dutifully accompanied his mother on their almost daily search for a house, were unavoidably thrown together.

Secure in her belief in Vera's engagement, and suspecting no danger to her son, Mrs. Campbell contented herself by marking her disapproval of, and dislike to, the governess by holding herself ungraciously aloof, though Robin himself lost no opportunity of showing that his devotion was as strong as ever. And Vera was obliged to acknowledge to herself that she took increasing pleasure in his society. Every characteristic that had been charming and lovable in the boy, had developed and strengthened in the high-principled, thoughtful young man. Without being specially intellectual, he

was quite sufficiently well read and cultivated to make him a charming companion. He was so simply and sincerely religious, so absolutely straightforward and manly in all his dealings, and showed so much sweet temper and kindness underlying his masterful and soldierly decision of manner, that instead of regarding him merely as the light-hearted companion of old, Vera found herself talking with him on all kinds of subjects, and relying on his opinions and sympathy, with a confidence she had never placed in anyone except her father.

The remembrance that he was possibly living in a fool's paradise would now and then obtrude itself, and mar Robin's content, and one morning after a few minutes' talk with Vera he sauntered into his uncle's study, feeling as nearly despondent as his sunshining disposition would permit, when Sir James held a newspaper towards him.

"Did you notice this, Robin?" he asked. "If I mistake not, it refers to the gentleman to whom we all supposed our young friend Miss Hamilton to be engaged."

Robin read the paragraph on which his uncle's finger rested with an exultation that set his veins in a tingle, and Sir James noted his nephew's kindling eye and glowing cheek with a slight smile.

"A marriage is arranged, and will very shortly take place, between Mr. Geoffrey Hamilton, and Mabel, daughter of Mr. George Vincent of Haslewood, Carlisle, and of London and Chicago," he read. "Then the old engagement must have ceased to exist for some time," he observed with assumed indifference.

"I imagine so. Robin, my boy," went on Sir James after a moment's pause, laying his hand on his nephew's arm. "I won't pretend not to know that this piece of news is important to you. I will ask no questions, and make no remarks, but I should like you to understand that my approval and sympathies are with what I believe to be your wishes."

"Thank you, uncle, for saying that. I think—that is, I was sure of it before," stammered Robin, wringing the hand his uncle extended to him, and then striding out of the window to toss up his cap with a whistle of boyish relief.

"How happy Robin is this morning, and how fond he is of that song!" remarked Molly presently to her governess, as they sat over their books in the schoolroom, and his voice came ringing up to them now and again, always singing, whistling or humming the same refrain:—  
"Love for love's sake is the love that lasts."

"I wish he was my brother," went on Molly. "I love him as if he were, and I think he is the most beautiful man I have ever seen."

Once or twice during the ensuing days Miss Hamilton caught curious glances directed on her by Sir James and his nephew, but whether Mrs. Campbell had seen the paragraph in the paper or not they did not know, until she startled the company assembled at luncheon one day as if a bombshell had descended amongst them by the sudden question:—

"Are you to be present at the marriage of your cousin, Miss Hamilton? I remember meeting Mr. Geoffrey Hamilton once. The young lady, I fancy, must be very wealthy, and it is likely to be a grand affair."

If there was any intention of provoking uneasiness or confusion by the question so publicly put, Mrs. Campbell was disappointed by the result, for Vera was quite equal to the occasion, and replied calmly "Oh, no. It will be, as you say, a gay wedding, much too gay for me to appear at under present circumstances."

"Was not the young man at one time supposed to be engaged to yourself?" went on her tormentor.

"He was engaged to me," returned Vera in the same indifferent tone. "It was my father's wish, but the engagement has been given up by mutual consent," and without glancing at Robin, who found it impossible to raise his eyes from his plate, she turned to Molly and began to discuss a picnic which had been arranged for the following day.

"She does not care—she does not care!" Robin was saying over and over again to himself exultantly. "The mum did me a good turn without meaning it, by showing me that cad is out of my way, and no harm done."

And after that the young soldier considered himself free to woo his lady-love after his own fashion.

A house was at length found to suit Mrs. Campbell's requirements. It was within a convenient distance of The Brackens, but it was decided, at the urgent request of Sir James, that she was not to take possession of it until after her son's departure.

They were such a comfortable little party, he said. He was so much enjoying the pleasant family life, which was such a change to him. Why should they not indulge him as long as possible? And his sister, softened by the approaching parting with Robin, had made no objection to the plan.

By this time Robin had found out all about Vera's aerial refuge on the roof of the Moor House. Indeed, he had on one occasion coaxed Miss Marten to become his accomplice in invading her retreat, but he had thought that lady rather obtuse, for she had remained with them until it had been time to descend to their respective rooms. Having, however, made up his mind, our young lover was not to be balked of his opportunity, and one lovely evening, having made himself certain of her whereabouts, he boldly mounted the steep little staircase, and presented himself, chair in hand, at her side.

"You will forgive my intrusion when I tell you my news," he began, as he seated himself, and produced from his pocket a long envelope, the import of which Vera guessed too well.

"You are going to leave us, then?" she said in a breathless voice.

"Yes. I am going, and at a very early date, too. This is Monday. I must go to town on Wednesday to get my traps together, and then I can only come back to bid you all 'Good-bye.'"

"I am sorry. We shall miss you sadly," was all Vera could trust herself to say. Her brain was in a whirl; the moors and hills and sunset sky seemed spinning round her, and a sound as of rushing waves was in her ears. She turned her head aside and closed her eyes for a moment as she lay back in her chair, and then all of a sudden she became aware that her hands were being held in a warm clasp, that she was gazing into a brown young face that she could scarcely see for tears, while Robin was impetuously pouring out the story of his love, which had commenced so many years ago, and declaring that never for an hour had his thoughts and hopes swerved from her, that she had been his star, his ideal of all that was beautiful and good, and that, in spite of that Hamilton fellow, he had always had a sort of conviction that he should win her in the end.

"For I was born under a lucky star," he said, "and I have never failed to get what I wanted if I tried hard enough."

Even this audacious statement did not produce any reply from Vera. Her tongue seemed tied, but she did not withdraw her hands, and the smile her tear-brimmed eyes and trembling mouth flashed on him, encouraged the bold wooer to bend his head and press his lips to hers.

"Will you not speak to me, Vera, my heart's darling?" went on the tender, musical voice. "Will you not speak one word to tell me I may take away with me the blessed hope that you will be my wife when—God willing—I return? It would put heart into me for whatever may come to know you are thinking of and praying for me when I am far away."

Then the spell of silence that had fallen on Vera was at last broken.

"Oh, Robin, Robin!" she sobbed as she yielded herself to his embrace, and the setting sun touched their two fair heads with a parting benediction. "Oh, Robin—that is just it! You are going away, and I think it will break my heart to let you go!"

CHAPTER IV.

Before the young people separated that night, it had been decided that Robin should inform his mother and uncle of their engagement, but that for the present no one else should be taken into their confidence. Sir James, he knew, would welcome his darling with delight.

"But your mother, Robin?" questioned Vera. "I know—I have always known—that she does not like me. She has always been afraid of this. Even in the old days at Zermatt she warned me that I must not aspire to 'a Campbell of Argyle,'" and her eyes twinkled at the remembrance.

But Robin's smile was rather a sad one as he replied:—

"It was not only you, my sweet. She never thought anyone good enough. I was a penniless chap in those days, and she believed you to be rich, but it made no difference."

"But I am penniless now."

"But things have changed with me. Do

you not know my cousin George is dead, and I am heir to Sir Colin!"

"Oh, Robin! I am sorry!"

"Nay, nay, my Vera, it is just as it should be. There is a grey old castle up in the north to which I hope one day to take you, but my uncle already puts me in poor George's place, and gives me the income he enjoyed, so, you see, I am quite independent of my mother, and can afford to marry as I please. The mum loves me, and, after a time, she will come round and love you for my sake, till she does so for your own," and with this assurance Vera was content. She was in truth too full of her new-found happiness, shadowed as it was by the dread of approaching parting, to give much thought to minor questions.

Robin, however, as he made his way up to The Brackens on the following morning, knew that he had no pleasant task before him, and he was diplomatic enough to unake his announcement at once, whilst his mother and uncle were together.

Sir James congratulated his nephew heartily, assuring him that his choice did him credit, and boldly added that it was "what he had wished from the first." Mrs. Campbell, however, sat pale and rigid, with her eyes fixed on her plate.

"And have you no word for me, mother?" pleaded Robin, laying his hand on hers. "Mother, we have always been such friends, have we not? Will you not wish me happiness—will you not welcome, and take to your heart the daughter I am giving you?"

"No, Robin," she returned, after a minute's pause. "We have, as you say, been good friends. You and your welfare have ever been my first thought, but you are asking too much of me when you beg me to take to my heart as your wife my niece's governess, a girl whom I always disliked—you, who might make your choice amongst the highest in the land!"

"My dear Mary," put in Sir James, "even supposing you are right, what better choice could the boy make? Where could he find a lady better fitted by birth and breeding to be his wife than Miss Hamilton? Where could he find a fairer or a sweeter bride?"

"Oh, you are infatuated, James—taken in by a pretty face, as all men are," returned his sister. "Well, Robin, I can say no more. You are your own master and can marry whom you will. You are on the point of leaving us for a post of danger, and I wish not to embitter our last days together by quarrelling."

"There's a dear old mum, and I may bring Vera to you," he whispered coaxingly.

"Nay, I cannot go as far as that," she responded coldly. "I cannot forget that my son has disappointed me sorely. Is it intended," she asked, turning again to Sir James, "that the future Lady Campbell—if so it must be—should continue in your service as Molly's governess?"

"We have thought of that," interrupted Robin, addressing Sir James. "Vera wishes to do so, and really, uncle, we do not see what else she can do, unless"—

hesitatingly—"my mother will receive her," but Mrs. Campbell shook her head decisively, and Robin went on:—"She has no home, as you are aware, and she is safe and happy under your kind protection, leading an honored and useful life which she really enjoys. So we decided that if you approve, the fact of our engagement shall be known only to you two, and things can, for the present, go on exactly the same."

"I see no objection. Indeed, I believe it will be the wisest plan," said Sir James, "and I do not think, my boy, you will have any cause to regret leaving your treasure in my charge during your absence." Thus, when the hour approached for Vera's arrival at The Brackens Sir James himself walked out with his nephew to meet her, and there was nothing wanting in his kind and fatherly congratulations and words of cordial welcome and approval as, with old-fashioned courtesy he led her to his own gate.

"But just a word of advice, my dear young lady," he added, retaining her hand. "You must not mind a little coldness at first from Robin's mother. She has had him all to herself, you see, and will not like sharing him with you. He has all her heart, so by-and-bye she will learn how to love where he loves, so long as he is happy."

It was, however, with an anxious and trembling heart that Vera accompanied Molly into the dining-room at luncheon-time, and very wistful and pleading was the look she directed towards Robin's mother as she seated herself, but Mrs. Campbell's cold glance and bend of the head was exactly the same as usual, and the girl could only hope that, though there was not to be the recognition and friendliness between them which she desired, there would at any rate be peace.

The day, with all its varied emotions, came to an end much too quickly. Robin and Vera took a long ride together in the afternoon, Molly, to her great surprise, being invited to drive with her father and aunt. And the next morning quite early the young soldier tore himself away, and proceeded to London to make preparations, which, together with regimental affairs, occupied him so much that only two days remained for farewells before the one on which he must repair to Southampton. Vera thought that all her life long she would remember the mingled sweetness and bitterness of those two days, but they were swift-winged, as such days always are, and the dreaded moment of parting came and passed.

"Try and be patient with the mum, and pray for me, sweetheart," whispered Robin, as they clasped hands for the last time.

"Every hour, with my every thought, Robin," she returned, with a brave smile on her white lips, and in another minute her lover was gone, and then Vera, excused from her duties for that day, took her aching heart to her favorite hiding-place and went over again in imagination the hours they had spent together.

In a few days life at Fiercroft settled back into its old routine, and but for the

letters which came to her by every opportunity, the short few weeks of Robin's stay would have appeared to Vera as a dream. These letters began to come almost as soon as he arrived at Southampton, and from every port at which they touched on the voyage, and afterwards by every mail. Sometimes only a few pencilled lines written on his knee, on a drumhead—by lantern light, or by the camp fire. Robin always found some means of writing and sending the letters, which he knew would bring joy into a pair of dear dark eyes at home. They were like himself, loving and hopeful, brave and cheery. He always spoke of himself as well and contented and looking forward to a happy homecoming, and Vera lived on these letters all through the autumn and winter that followed.

Unconscious Molly would now and then communicate pieces of intelligence gathered from her father or aunt, and chatter by the hour about her dear, brave cousin Robert and his doings, till her companion felt quite a traitor for keeping the affectionate little girl in the dark, whilst listening to news she could have told so much better herself, but she felt obliged to respect Sir James' wish that his young daughter should be kept in ignorance until his nephew's return. Mrs. Campbell, who moved into her own house shortly after the departure of her son, she rarely saw. That lady spent Christmas and the early part of the New Year in London, and afterwards Vera herself was away from Firholt on a short visit to some old friends of her father's, and then as the beautiful spring awoke, letters from the seat of war brought anxious news. Sir James Innis made opportunities for a few minutes' talk with his daughter's governess now and then, and cheered her with his warm sympathy and hopeful and keen-sighted views of the situation, but her heart could not fail to grow heavy as the days went on and the casualty lists grew so long from sickness and death.

Mrs. Campbell had an attack of illness, from which she was long in recovering, and during her tedious convalescence her brother made more than one attempt to induce her to see Vera and accept from her the daughterly care and companionship which the latter was so willing and eager to bestow on Robin's mother, but this she obstinately refused to do, and so the two women, whose ever thought was his, bore each her load of anxiety unshared by the sympathy of the other.

So things went on till, on one of those fair April mornings, when the actual joy of living in such a beautiful world seems almost overpowering, came the terrible casualty report, which Vera had always so dreaded to see that she never opened a paper without a qualm of heart-sickness: "Missing, and supposed to have been killed, Lieutenant Robin Campbell of the 2nd Devon Regiment." It was the usual thing. A patrol had been surrounded and cut off, and a man who escaped back to camp reported his officer as having fallen after repelling the attack with splendid gallantry. Vera's heart seemed to contract with agony. She

could not see to read the words a second time, but sat gazing down the sunlit valley on which her windows looked with tearless eyes. Bees and butterflies were hovering over the primroses and bluebells, which clustered under the vivid emerald of the larches and young fir-trees; larks were carolling in the cloudless skies above. How cruel the world was to be so beautiful, when Robin, her brave, comely young lover, was lying wounded or dead on the burning African veldt, was the thought that beat itself into her brain, and while she still sat thus, a scrawled line from Sir James was brought to her. "Do not lose heart," it said. "These reports are so often false, and afterwards contradicted. I am on my way to town, to the War Office. My poor sister is in a sad condition," was all he said, but it roused the girl from her stupor of grief.

"I am not the only one who suffers," she said to herself. "My poor Robin's mother—oh, if I might only go to her!" Then she pulled herself together, and, growing calmer, prepared to cycle to The Brackens as usual.

Sir James' personal servant, an old soldier, was on the look-out for her.

"Miss Molly does not know the bad news of Mr. Campbell, madam," he observed, accosting her respectfully, "and my master does not wish her to do so at present; the young lady would fret so. I was to say that Sir James would either return this evening, or wire his tidings."

"Thank you, Evans; I will be careful," returned Vera quietly, but Evans shook his trim grey head wisely, as he retreated to his own quarters. He was an observant and silent man, and noted a good many more things than folks gave him credit for. "The young lady is hard hit," he soliloquised, "about as hard hit as she can be, but she takes it standing, so to speak. She's a thoroughbred un as ever I see, and if, please God, the young gentleman comes back, there'll be a pair of 'em."

Vera compelled herself to go through Molly's lessons as usual, though every nerve was on the strain, and just as she was beginning to feel it unbearable a servant entered to say Mrs. Campbell was in the drawing-room, and desired to see her. She rose in bewilderment.

"Are you sure she asked for me?" she inquired, while Molly exclaimed:—

"Why, Aunt Mary is ill in bed, Jane!" "She is certainly asking for Miss Hamilton, but the poor lady does look mortal ill, miss," returned Jane sympathetically, and Vera proceeded to the drawing-room as quickly as her trembling limbs would permit.

Could the tremulous, weeping woman who tottered across the room to meet her be the cold, proud Mrs. Campbell? she thought in amaze.

"I could not help coming," said the feeble, broken voice. "I could not send for you after the way in which I have treated you, but I have risen from my sick bed to ask if you can find forgiveness in your heart for Robin's mother, Miss Hamilton. Oh, my dear, my dear! My only son may be lying dead, and I

have been laid upon him, and I know you love him, too." And the next moment Robin's mother was in Vera's arms, weeping out her poor sore heart, while the girl strove to comfort her with loving, hopeful words and gentle caresses. She brought her wine with her own hands and placed her on a couch, with difficulty excluding the wondering Molly, and together the two women who loved Robin wore out the hours of the long day, waiting for the news of him which did not come, for when Sir James' telegram at length arrived it only said, "No further news. Am remaining in town." And then Vera herself took the invalid to her home, and did not leave her until she had fallen asleep with her hand clasped in hers.

Several days of suspense followed, days in which the two tortured hearts, sick with hope deferred, could only hope and pray, "with every thought, every hour," as Vera had said at the moment of parting, but the prayer sustained the hope so that it did not quite die away. A few lines from his sister told Sir James of the complete reconciliation between her and Vera, and he wrote a reply of heartfelt gladness, but he would not return, he said, until he could bring them definite news. It was nearly a week before this news came, and changed their drooping hopes into fervent thankfulness: "Lieut. R. Campbell of the 2nd Devons, who was missing, and supposed to be killed, has returned to camp. He was wounded in the arm and taken prisoner, but afterwards escaped."

And then, being unable to hear anything more, Sir James came home.

Occasional reports of his progress appeared, which were followed after a time by a note from Robin himself, written with his left hand. His arm had been badly shattered, he wrote, and though so far on the mend that they need not be anxious, the doctors agreed that it could not be serviceable for a long time to come, and therefore he was to come home on sick leave.

It was on a glorious summer day, when the Surrey hills lay golden in the sunshine, that Robin came amongst them again, pale and gaunt, and with his useless arm still in a sling, but glowing with happiness, and as his train steamed into

the station, where quite a crowd had collected to welcome, with ringing cheers, the wounded hero, his delighted eyes fell on the tall form of his mother, leaning on the arm of Vera, as on a daughter.

"I am not sure but that your wound did you good service, my boy," observed Sir James, as he and his nephew sat together that evening. "Your mother might not have known and loved a daughter but for the peril of her son. When are you thinking of taking Lady Campbell home?"

"Lady Campbell!" echoed Robin.  
"Even so, my boy. Did you not receive my wire? Did you not hear the cheers for 'Sir Robin'? Your uncle Colin died a fortnight ago, and you know what that means."

That was a happy summer at Firholt, but the engagement which was supposed to be known only to the family proved not to have been such a great secret after all. Everyone seemed to know of it at once, without being told, and kind Miss Marten assured her favorite boarder that she had felt sure of it in her own mind "even before it happened."

Vera could not help smiling a little over her cousin Geoffrey's letter of congratulation. It was kind, and he sent a handsome wedding present, but it struck a distinct note of chagrin at the idea of his cousin having so quickly consoled herself for the defection of his noble self. Robin had gone off singing his old refrain, "Love for love's sake is the love that lasts," after she had shown it to him, and told him how she had received Geoffrey's letter of renunciation on the very evening she had first heard that song.

The bloom had not quite faded from the heather when there was a quiet wedding at The Brackens, happy Molly figuring as one of the bridesmaids. And then Sir Robin Campbell took his bonnie bride to the grey old castle in Argyleshire which was to be their home.

Here also in due time came Mrs. Campbell, who is never so happy as when visiting her son, and she now freely acknowledges her conviction that even a "Campbell of Argyle" could scarcely have found a fitter mate than Veronica—Lady Campbell.



