

**LEISURE HOUR
SERIES: A ROMANCE
OF THE MOORS**

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Leisure Hour Series: A Romance of the Moors by Mona Caird

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MONA CAIRD

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OF THE MOORS**

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LEISURE HOUR SERIES

A ROMANCE OF THE MOORS

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BY
MONA CAIRD

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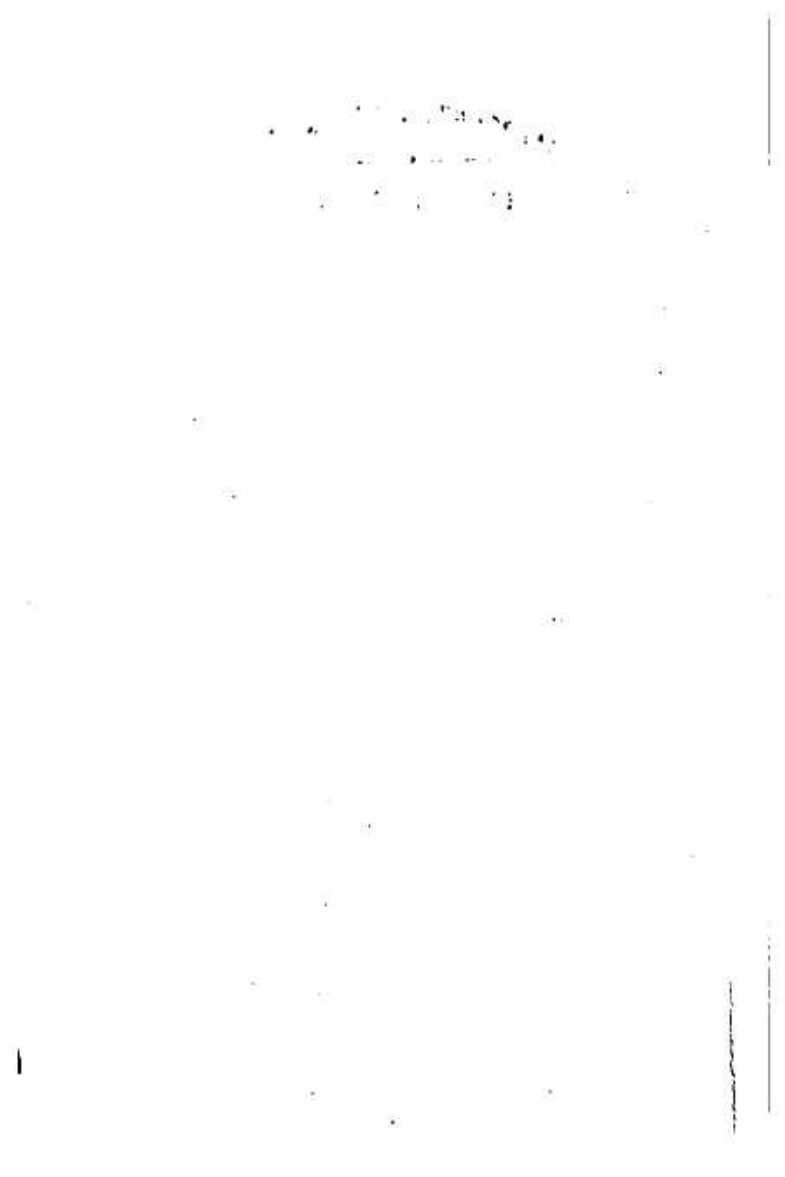
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A ROMANCE OF THE MOORS.

CHAPTER I.

Wooling and Wiltning.

“NOW then, mother, jump up! Look out, lads,—how you *do* manage to get in the way! Considering your size, it's wonderful!”

Before the door of a little gray farm-house stood a very high market-cart, in which uncouth vehicle, the farmer, John Coverdale, with his wife and eldest son, were about to drive their weekly twelve miles downhill to the pleasant town of Dedborough. The florid broad-shouldered Yorkshireman had

already taken up a firm position in the cart, while his excellent Scottish wife was being assisted to mount by Dick, a dark-haired young fellow, whose knee-breeches, brown coat and felt hat set off to full advantage his good looks and fine carriage.

The admonition to his two red-haired young brothers was given good-naturedly, and without the strong Yorkshire accent of his father, or his mother's unmistakable Scottish intonation. According to a frequent custom among this class in her more lettered country, the young man had been sent to the University of St. Andrew's, whence he returned—according to his father—with a store of useless learning and ridiculous manners only fit for idle folk who could afford to sit at home and attend to their airs and graces.

John Coverdale regarded these superficial acquirements as the regrettable representa-

tives of good money thrown away, not recognizing that the young man, from his very childhood, had been remarkable for a peculiar distinction of manner, which the University might have fostered, but could certainly not supply.

In appearance Dick did not "favor his parents," as the country people said, though he possessed the strong, well-set-up frame of the Coverdales, who had lived a simple outdoor life upon these breezy heights above Niddesdale for five or six generations. Some of the older folks in the dale, who remembered Dick's great-grandfather, used to say that "the laad" was the "living image" of the old man.

The two younger boys, Johnny and Tommy, went to the school in Winterbridge, a village at the foot of the hill, while Dick shared with his father and a couple of men the work of the farm.

He had shown himself a stout laborer and a cheery one; yet there was something about the young fellow that seemed to separate him from his comrades. He had wandering instincts, fits of idleness alternating with spurts of fierce energy; and often he would sink into low spirits, for which his mother prescribed "Cockle's Pills," as she was wont to do for all the ailments of body and soul—especially of soul.

"Johnny, just hand me up yon basket of fresh butter," said Mrs. Coverdale, after she had safely mounted. "A'm just taking some to Jean; they canna get any fit to eat in Dedborough, to my thinking."

Jean was Mrs. Coverdale's sister, who had married from Braisted Farm, while on a visit there, Thomas Wellbeloved, the principal grocer in Dedborough.

"And a'm taking a few airly gooseberries," added the kind-hearted farmer's