

Book of the Week.

THE PRICE OF SILENCE.*

Opening with an exceedingly interesting prologue, "The Price of Silence" maintains a very high standard throughout. It is an American story, written with the crispness and vigour inseparable from American authorship.

The theme is really race-prejudice—the abhorrence of the good old Creole families for the least drop of coloured blood in anyone's ancestry.

The Prologue consists of a single vivid scene: a domiciliary visit to the house of Nemours de Laussan—Confederate soldier absent from home. His wife has to receive the officers of the detested United States Army, now in the ascendant, whose purpose is to take her only son prisoner—a lad of sixteen accused as a spy. But Pierre de Laussan in the interval between the arrival of the soldiers and their admission effects an escape over the roofs of the houses and out by someone else's door. On his way, and before he leaves his home, he contrives to hide the most priceless treasure of his father's house—the sword of Lafayette. But the boy falls in the war with his father, and never returns to divulge the hiding place. It is sought for in vain for many years, and eventually as a reward to whoso may discover is offered the hand of a very beautiful girl—child of Madame de Laussan's adopted daughter.

Noemie Carrington enters into the compact light-heartedly at the dinner party given for her debut, but there comes a time when she regrets the bargain with all her heart.

But this is not the only subtle excitement in the book. At the time of the hiding of the sword something else is mislaid—a certain casket containing little of value except a letter, and for the recovery of this document there is apparently nothing that Madame de Laussan will not give. To her chagrin she learns that it is in the hands of a man for whom she has no liking, and still less respect when she discovers him to be the son of the United States officer who commanded the fatal domiciliary visit.

It transpires that there is something exceedingly detrimental to the interests of Noemie de Laussan Carrington in that letter, and as it happens that she is a young woman of property in addition to being exceedingly fascinating, Sidney Cortland determines that he will win her. He is poor, he has risen from the ranks, and is no match for the girl, but he holds a trump card, apparently, in possessing the letter, and Madame de Laussan sees no way out of backing his suit.

Noemie has no lack of lovers, but amongst them stand out two very specially, Cortland, who has a sort of fascination for her, and Maxime Allard, her equal in all things, a friend of her childhood. But poor Maxime is in disgrace with Noemie's family—l'oncle Grandchamps will not receive him on account of a political difference of opinion he has had with Maxime's father. L'oncle Grandchamps is a splendid old fellow with a catch-

* By M. E. M. Davis. (Constable.)

word, "dans le temps"—the good old times when he was young. His word is law, and Maxime does not visit the Laussans. There is real difficulty in imagining how the charming Maxime is to succeed in his suit, for Fortune seems inclined to favour, not the brave but the braggart—a perhaps not uncommon occurrence in a world where "nothing succeeds like success!"

The characterisation is good throughout. The portraits of the negroes—Uncle Mink and faithful Sirène—are most captivating; they play their parts in the de Laussan household with unobtrusive power. The book is thoroughly life-like, and well worth reading. E.L.H.

Verse.

So nigh to grandeur is our dust,
So nigh is God to man,
Where duty whispers low, "Thou must,"
The soul replies, "I can."

EMERSON.

Coming Events.

September 30 to November 1.—Royal Sanitary Institute, Parkes Museum, Margaret Street, W., Course of Lectures on Hygiene in its Bearing on School Life. First Lecture: Infectious Diseases, A. Wellesley Harris, M.R.C.S., D.P.H.

October 1.—Opening of Medical Schools.

October 8.—Nurses' Missionary League, Valectory Meetings, University Hall, Gordon Square, W.C., 2.30—6, 7—9 p.m.

October 10.—Meeting, Central Midwives' Board, Caxton House, S.W.

October 11.—Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, 431, Oxford Street, W., 4 p.m.

October 12.—Hospital Saturday in London.

October 21 to 25.—Annual Conference of the National Union of Women Workers, Manchester.

October 24.—Central Midwives' Board, Examination, London, Bristol, Manchester, and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

November 4.—Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland. Examination for Certificate in Nursing and Attending on the Insane.

A Word for the Week.

This is the heart of the Empire.

The key of the Empire is not in India, it is not in Egypt, and it is not in Africa. It is Great Britain, in these little islands, and the scene of concentrated endeavour on which I have looked to-day, makes me feel more and more that we are not old as a nation, but that we are still young, and that there are unrealised opportunities within the grasp of all.

The Rt. Hon. R. HALDANE, M.P., at Liverpool.

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