

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"LADY BRIDGET IN THE NEVER-NEVER LAND."*

This story of colonial life is bright and amusing. The scene is laid for the most part in the Australian bush. Lady Biddy is the daughter of an Irish peer, an O'Hara, "and the O'Haras had been recklessly extravagant, squandering alike their feelings and their money." Biddy after squandering her affection on a certain Wiloughby Maule, and finding that her outlay was a mistake, he having preferred the solid advantages in a bride of golden guineas to the copper tints of pretty Lady Bridget's hair, hides her disappointment—it does not amount to anything more serious—with her friend Joan Gildea, whose married life is spent in the Bush.

Biddy, with the buoyancy natural to her nationality, finds her way shortly after to accept another lover, Colin McKeith, also a ranch owner, some miles distant from her friend. Biddy is not in the least suited for such a life, but she tells Joan she cannot return to London to the old life, "that sort of life one has to lead with Aunt Eliza, the Gavericks and their set. I can't go on pushing and striving and rushing here and there in order to be seen at the right houses and join the hunt after fleeing eligibles." She gave a bitter little laugh, and then her tone changed to that ripple of frivolity in which, nevertheless, Mrs. Gildea discerned the under-beat of tragedy. "I've come," said Biddy, "to the conclusion that the only things which make London endurable as I know it are unlimited credit at a good dress-maker—oh, and one of the beautiful new motor cars. You don't mind travelling from Dan to Beersheba if you can do it in five minutes. But when you've got to catch the omnibus or take the Tube dressed in garden party finery, then it's all too disproportionate and tiresome."

In contrast to the artificial life she has escaped from is the rough true wooing of Colin, which nevertheless had so much tenderness and imagination. "I'm damned if I would give up my free will to any one, and I wouldn't like the woman who was my mate to do it either."

"Your mate!" she repeated.

"You don't know the Bush idea of a real mate. Shoulder to shoulder, back to back, no getting behind one or the other, giving up your life for your mate, if it came to a pinch."

"And that's your idea of love?"

"Something like it, only closer, dearer. A thing you couldn't talk about even to your mate, unless your mate was your wife. A flower that blooms once in your life, and would never, if it were cut off, bloom again. . . . Bridget, you said you had never found a real man to love you. Here's one." He patted his broad chest with his open palm. "I'm a rough Bushy, and there's not a frill about me, but I'm bed-rock if you come

to the Reality. I'm a lode you never struck in your life before. There's payable gold here, if you choose to work me. You might as well try to dam the river Leichardt with this little hand I am holding as try to stop me loving you."

Their married life was just what might have been expected. The town-bred woman wearied of the rough life and the loneliness, and the constant absence of Colin. The appearance of Wiloughby Maule on the scene nearly caused an irreparable breach between husband and wife, and indeed separated them for a season. But wedded love and faith triumphed, and we take leave of them, re-united.

The descriptions of Bush life and manners are well worth reading, apart from the story, which is full of interest from end to end.

H. H.

VERSE.

A sense of an earnest will
To help the lowly-living,
And a terrible heart-thrill,
If you have no power of giving;
An arm of aid to the weak,
A friendly hand to the friendless,
Kind words, so short to speak,
But whose echo is endless;
The world is wide, these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are all.
Lord Houghton.

COMING EVENTS.

May 14th.—Church Missionary Society. Conversazione for Nurses, Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, E.C. 10 a.m. to 9.30 p.m.

May 17th-22nd.—General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, S.E. Third Post-Graduate Week for Midwives. Monday, May 17th, Reception by Matron and Staff. 4 p.m.

May 18th to 22nd.—Eighth Annual Nursing and Midwifery Exhibition, Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster, S.W.

May 19th.—Asylum Workers' Association. Annual General Meeting. 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W. Chair, Sir John Jardine, K.C.I.E., M.P., President.

June 10th.—National Council of Trained Nurses Conference Day.

Morning Session: "The Duty of Trained Nurses in War." 11 to 1.

Afternoon Session: "The Place of the Imperial Mother in Peace and War." 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, W. 3 to 5.30.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

No sacrifice is too great to save the world from the irremediable disaster of losing at one blow honour, freedom and religion.—*The Bishop of London.*

* By Mrs. Campbell Praed. (Hutchinson & Co., London.)

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