

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE PIONEERS.*

This novel is the Australasian Prize Novel in Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton's All-British Prize Novel Competition. It has therefore a powerful recommendation which is in our opinion thoroughly justified. Colonial tales of the best type are apt to impress one with long vistas and to breathe a spirit of freedom and space that must fall as refreshment on dwellers in towns. One is also compelled by them to measure life by other standards than our own, which should always be of great benefit. "The Pioneers" is a striking example of this type. Donald Cameron and Mary his wife were settlers, and at the opening of the story have just arrived at their destination some miles inland from Port Southern.

Newly married, almost newly acquainted, were these solitary invaders of this uncultivated tract of land. Donald had seen his future wife on the wharf among the emigrant women, and he offered her marriage. He was not disinterested in his desire, as there was a Government bounty offered to married couples coming to the colony, and he wanted the money to begin with. The woman, too, was glad of his protection.

She had killed a man by accident, a man whom we are left to infer had pressed her with unwelcome attention, and she was escaping from the consequences of her act. But in spite of this unromantic wooing, Donald's first act is to kneel on the virgin soil and give thanks, for he said, "She is a good woman for a man to have with him when he goes to the ends of the earth to carve out a name for himself." He was right in his estimate of her, and though his dour integrity caused him to be feared and disliked by others, he held her respect to the end. She tells him that first night "I'm not worthy of you."

"Whist," he said, "You're my woman, my wife. It's all done with, the past."

In ten years Cameron's had become the biggest clearing in the hills, as it was the oldest. These ten years had set their mark on Donald; he worked insatiably. A gawky long-limbed boy, young Davey, was their only child.

Many of the neighbouring settlers were escaped convicts, and a notable figure among them was the schoolmaster Daniel Farrel, whose offence had been a political one. He and his little motherless daughter, Deidre, come under Mary Cameron's influence, and the man's respectful homage is once and for all laid at her feet.

In due time Deidre grows up into a beautiful girl, and young Davey into a fine young man; and they plight their troth under the dying sunset.

"Deidre," he whispered, as if he had never before said her name, and to say it were like singing in church. He kissed her again, slowly and tenderly; the first pressure of her lips had made a man of him.

* By Katharine Susannah Pritchard. Hodder & Stoughton New York.

The course of their love, however, ran by no means smoothly. Deidre was something of a coquette, and the handsome wild Conal, "Fighting Conal"—a long, black browed drover—was also a suitor for her hand.

It was at Mrs. Mary Ann's dance that the mischief was done. Davey, after two years' absence, had returned to claim her promise. "He forgot everything but that Deidre was laughing at him—Deidre, his sweetheart, was laughing at him—Deidre, who had promised—He stumbled out of the room."

Davey then took to wild, lawless ways, and his anger was turned against his upright hard father, who had the reputation of being "as mean as they make 'em." Davey joins with Conal and others in acquiring and branding cattle, some of which were his father's, in a manner "that is not as you may say permitted by law." The account of their methods in so doing is very interesting.

Tragedies abound in this book. Wild Conal is treacherously shot in the back, but dies happily, because Deidre tended his last moments. Davey narrowly escapes punishment for his offence. Deidre, to save her father from serving the remainder of his sentence, marries the hated Macnab, and kills him on her wedding day.

But fifteen years after we are allowed a glimpse of Davey and Deidre with their boy Dan. His grandmother, Mary Cameron, before her death, had impressed the lad with his responsibilities. "You will be a pioneer of paths that will make the world a better, happier place to live in."

H. H.

THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE.

Though loud the chant of human fate
From earth to heaven be flung,
The other side of silence wait
A myriad songs unsung:

Of dying dreams and living dread,
Of good that seems in vain,
Of memory mourning for its dead,
And love that veils its pain;

With all those happier hidden things
Of seventy years or seven,
From childhood's voiceless visionings,
To Age's hopes of Heaven.

Life of thy gifts be this my choice:
That, humbly drawing near,
Waiting to catch the still small voice,
I win the heart to hear.

By Habberton Lulham.

COMING EVENTS.

October 5th to 7th.—National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland. The Annual Conference and Council Meetings, Central Hall, Westminster, 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. Mrs. Creighton, President.

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