

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

SISTER SORROW: A STORY OF AUSTRALIAN LIFE.*

The child who cost its mother her life was named by the bereaved father, Sorrow. Later, recognising the injustice done to the child, she was called Dolores.

This girl eventually became governess to an Australian family, and it is her friend, the half sister of her pupils, who tells the story.

Bel and Bee, her pupils, were not remarkable for their shyness; there was certainly no fear of their getting "bushed" either among people or gum trees.

You couldn't say the same for Dolores. A young, dreamy creature, soft and plump, all graceful curves, and helpless droopings, it is right at the commencement of the book that she meets the man who was to have such a baleful influence upon her life.

"The Beginning began at breakfast time, that first morning after our arrival at the Bellevue Hotel in Leichardt's Town. The whole family of us had come down from Barolin, Father, my stepmother Clara, my half sisters Bel and Bee, myself and Dolores Lloyd, the girls' governess.

"The mob as a whole seemed to be making a little sensation in the dining room; those wild bush girls, Dolores so distinctive in her own curiously attractive way, Father himself—the type of the early Australian pioneer I have heard him called, and then poor Clara quite unconscious that she was the most striking of the lot. She reminded me of a drawing-room cushion set on end, tied round the middle, and with a big blue-eyed, red and white, worse-for-wear doll's head stuck on to the top of it."

The other hotel guests included two men with whom the story is closely concerned; one of whom was quick to notice Dolores.

"That's a pretty girl," he remarked. "Seems a bit off her bearings." We think this opinion was fully justified. The man who gave it was her unfortunate destiny.

He was of powerful frame and personality, rough, brutal and impatient. The other man, for whom the teller of the story, Agatha, conceived a romantic and it must be said sentimentally expressed attraction is described by her as the "Idealist Student."

Dolores possessed in some degree second sight, and Phil Wilkins from the first evening of their acquaintance hypnotises her, so that she becomes absolutely under his influence. He had an evil past, and saw that this gift would prove valuable to him for the obtaining of information which would be of benefit to him.

Dolores, usually reserved and stand-offish with men, unaccountably loses all this reserve at the

* Mrs. Campbell Praed. Hutchinson & Co., London.

beginning of her acquaintance with this rough stranger man. On the second evening of their acquaintance, Agatha describes how when the party was gathered together in the veranda, and Phil Wilkins was telling thrilling stories of his wild adventures, Agatha noticed something that startled her and made her very angry. "The ray from the reflector lamp showed Dolores who sat beside him on the camp stool. She had her elbow on the broad wooden shelf of his chair and her hand and arm lay along it. It was such a pretty arm, soft and dreamy with a wrist like that of a child, the inner side turned up showing the blue veins and—this was the thing that startled and angered me—Mr. Wilkins' large hand covered her hand, which rested apparently quite contented underneath the passive grasp. The grasp was not ardent, it was just quietly possessive." In less than a week he had married her, and had taken her to his home on Oronga Island.

In vain Agatha had tried to break the spell which the girl was under.

"Dody, listen to me, wake up," I cried. "You're in a dream. You don't know the awfulness of what you're consenting to! Wake up. Tell him this marriage is not to be."

She looked from him to me. There was evidently a struggle going on in her mind.

"It isn't that I am ungrateful, or that I don't care for you. . . . It is that I must do as he wishes. I *want* to do as he wishes."

There is no space to tell of the wreck that poor Dolores becomes under Wilkins' terrible influence, or how, having failed to aid him in his purpose, he slowly poisons her with a preparation of curare.

Agatha, however, with the aid of Torvald, her hero, effects her rescue and escape. Wilkins is drowned in the attempt to kidnap and drown Dolores from a boat in the bay. She is again rescued by Torvald.

There are many graphic and exciting scenes, but the closing pages describe Agatha in a state of beatitude as she learns that Torvald's love is her indeed own. H. H.

COMING EVENTS.

April 20th.—American Day. American Service of Consecration, St. Paul's, E.C., attended by the King and Queen.

April 20th.—Guy's Hospital Nurses' League. Dinner, 7 p.m. Annual Meeting, 8 p.m. Nurses' Home, S.E.

April 27th.—Quarterly Meeting Matrons' Council, Nurses' Home, Charing Cross Hospital, by kind invitation of the President, 4 p.m. Tea, 4.45 p.m. Address by Mr. Eustace Miles, on "Health. Economy and Food," 5 p.m.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD (England).

April 20th.—Penal Cases. Offices, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings. 11 a.m.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD (Scotland).

April 30th.—Examinations. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen.

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