

The Pioneers

BY KATHARINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD

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CHAPTER XXXIV.

Davey was on his way to Steve's when he saw that the wooden church with a zinc roof, which had just been built in Wirreford, was lighted, and that people were going into it. It was early evening, the sky clear above the sharp outlines of the building, a few stars quivering in the limpid twilight.

Davey pulled up his horse to stare at the church. The place had been building a long while. This was the first time he had seen it up and finished.

In the paddock beside it was his father's carry-all, and the grey horse beside it was Bessie, old Lass's daughter. A vague heart pain caught his breath. The wind brought the strain of a plaintive hymn. They must be inside, his mother and father, he told himself. He got off his horse and led her into the deep shadow the paling fence threw. A longing to see them seized him. He stood there trying to hear their voices.

After a moment he thought he could hear his mother's voice, frail and sweet, in the singing. He remembered how she had sung to him once, how she had sung over her spinning wheel and the quaint little song it was. The tune of it went flying through his brain with the tap-tap of the spinning wheel. How gay and dear her voice had been. He remembered how he used to love to see a child sit clucking at her dress when she sang like that. And the old man! In that moment of loneliness he forgot the hardness and bitterness there had been between him and his father. A wave of tenderness overwhelmed him. Pride and a longing for their love struggled in him with a physical hurt beyond endurance.

He determined to stand there and wait to see them come out of church. Friday night services after the cattle sales were an institution as new as the church. They had been organized so that christenings, marriages, and some soul-saving in the bargain, might be done while the hill folk were down for the sales. McNab had done his best to move the parson who had accepted the Wirree as his cure of souls, but the young man stuck like a limpet, and there was no telling, the

gossips said, how moral and church-going he might not make Wirreford before he was done with it.

Davey waited and watched. When the people came filing out of the doorway, he edged along the fence so that he could see their faces as they passed under the flare of an oil-can over the door.

There were not many of them, two or three women and children, and an old man or two. They gathered and were talking about the gateway when Mary Cameron came out.

Davey saw her face under the light for a moment. There was a shine of tears on her cheeks. Her figure, in the grey dress he knew so well, seemed thinner than it used to be. Her little straw bonnet was pressed down close on her head, her shawl drawn over her shoulders. She hurried from the church without speaking to anyone. He saw her hand flutter out to the post by the door as she felt for the step.

She's been crying and saying her prayers for me," he told himself with pain and self-reproach.

He waited to see Donald Cameron come from the church and join her.

A girl—a fair-haired girl—detached herself from the little gathering about the gate and went towards her.

"Oh, there you are, Mrs. Cameron, dear," she said. "I was waiting to help you put Bess in!"

Davey knew her voice. It was Jessie Rees. His heart gave a throb of gratitude.

The young parson came out and slammed the church door behind him. Davey's glance flew to the paddock.

He could see his mother's grey-clad figure moving about among the vehicles and the horses.

"The old man's not with her. She's harnessing up herself," he thought. "Where is he, I wonder? She wouldn't have come down alone."

He saw the heavy buggy, his mother sitting erect in it, go out along the road. He followed at a little distance. The buggy halted before the Black Bull.

A dozen horses, dogs lying limp and silent at their heels, were tethered to the posts before it. The bar was open and noisy with men drinking. They were gathered about its narrow benches like flies. From the gaping doors a garish light fell. But it was out of range of the light that Mary Cameron had drawn up her horse. She sat very still. The outlines of the vehicle were ruled black against the starlight which streamed wanly on her figure and on the sturdy grey horse.

"What on earth is she waiting for?" Davey asked himself.

He was going to her when the side-door of the Black Bull—the door of McNab's parlor, as he knew—opened. Donald Cameron stood in it for a moment. Davey saw McNab behind him, his crooked figure and twisted face with the withered fringe of hair about it.

Cameron staggered across the stretch of gravel to the buggy in which his wife sat waiting. He climbed into it.

"Will you not let me drive, Donald?"

The clear sweetness of his mother's voice came to the boy's ears.

"No," Donald Cameron said unsteadily. "There's no woman living will drive me while I can lay hands on the reins."

The four-wheeler moved away over the long winding road to the hills. Davey was stupefied.

"So McNab's got him," he muttered, glancing at the ramshackle shanty. The sign-board of the Black Bull, with red eyes on its dingy white ground, was just visible. The glare from the bar lighted it.

"That's why she goes to church alone. The old man's drinking," he thought.

He turned to look after the buggy. It was bumping and jolting over the ruts and barking the road-side. Davey held his breath; he saw the mare buck and then take the log culvert over the creek two or three hundred yards from McNab's.

"He's not fit to drive," he told himself, and swinging into his saddle, set off down the road. "He'll turn the wheel on a log, or drive off the road. She knows. That's why she wanted to drive."

He followed at a little distance all the way through the hills. Sometimes he heard his mother's voice, patient and yet edged with a weariness and despair, exclaiming: "Mind there's a bad rut to the left!" or "You're driving too near the edge of the road, Donald!"

But steadily, without reference to either of them, the little horse kept to the track. Davey followed them all the way home, to the very gates of the house in which he was born. Then he turned back into the shade of the trees again. Once his mother had looked round and seen the watchful horseman. She had not been near enough to see his face. He rode in the shadows. But he had seen her face and it was a revelation to him.

A woman must have a good deal of courage to drive beside a drunken man in the hills at night, he knew. The look on her face hurt him. There were death gaps at a dozen places on the road; and Donald Cameron was as stubborn as a mule. Neither the mare, nor his wife, could have saved him if he had taken it into his head to drive in any given direction. Davey wondered how often his mother had driven like this before. He vowed that she would never do it again—if he could help it.

CHAPTER XXXV.

After the sales on the following Friday, when the dust of the yards was heavy in the air, and the stock horses stood in irregular, drooping lines outside the Black Bull and Mrs. Mary

Ann Hegarty's, Davey made his way to where on an open space of land the church had been built. Wirreford had out its lights—garish oil flares and rush candles—and the little fires lighted before the doors of the houses to keep off sand flies and mosquitoes, smouldered in the dusk, sending up wreaths of blue smoke.

He had made up his mind as to what he was going to do. During the week Conal had been mustering and branding the cows and calves drafted from the scrub mob. Davey had worked with him, and many of the calves he had scarred with Maitland's double M. were the progeny of his father's cattle. Half a dozen cows bore the D.C. brand under their thick hair. Conal had wanted to pay him off. He had said Davey that there was no need for him to burn his fingers with this business, and that he could run the mob to the border, or to Melbourne, across the swamp, if the south-eastern rivers were down; but he was short-handed, Davey knew; a sense of obligation urged him to stick to Conal until the whole of the mob they had moonlighted together was disposed of.

Conal had insisted on getting the cows and calves into a half-timbered paddock below Steve's, the day before, and had run a hundred of Maitland's fattened beasts with them. He meant to make a start, and have the mob on the roads early next morning.

There was a race-meeting in the long paddock behind McNab's that Friday.

Conal and he had come into the Wirree to show themselves before starting off on their overland journey. Almost every man in the countryside was there.

Davey wondered why the Schoolmaster had not come down to the township with Conal and himself. He had been a different man since their return, very silent, scarcely stirring from his chair in the back room, while Deirdre hovered, never very far from him, anxious and protective as a mother-bird.

She had not told him what had happened while Conal and he were away—how the Schoolmaster had said to her one day, suddenly:

"It's very dark, Deirdre. Is there going to be a storm?"

The sunshine was blank and golden out of doors.

"No," she had said, laughing. "There's not a sign of one."

"Where are you?" he asked, his voice strange and strained.

"Why, I'm here just beside you," she replied.

He put out his hands.

"I can't see you," he said. "It's the dark, Deirdre! My God... it's the dark."

For a long time he had sat staring while she knelt beside him, crying, murmuring eagerly and tenderly, trying to soothe and to comfort him. But from that time the dimming and obliterating of the whole world had begun for him.

The heavy darkness had passed. It was not all night yet, but a misty twilight. He had forbidden her to speak of it, so that Davey did not know. Conal and Steve had guessed, but Davey's mind, busy with its own problems, was slower to realize what was going on about him. It had roused every loyal and fighting instinct in him to see his mother with that look of suffering on her face; his father in the way of becoming McNab's prey—losing all that he's had gained through years of toil and harsh integrity by falling into the pigs' trough McNab had set for him.

It was that stern righteousness of his, his sober, stolid virtue, which had given Cameron the place in the respect and grudging homage of the countryside that his wealth and property alone would not have won for him; they had cloaked even his meanness with a sombre dignity and brought him the half-jeering title of the Laird of Ayrmuir.

(To be continued.)

Minard's Liniment for Burns & Scalds.

About the House

Wholesome Cold Weather Breads.

Good graham bread is wholesome and delicious at any time of the year, but if there is a time when it seems to just fit the appetite a little better than any other, it is when the crisp cold days of autumn and winter are with us.

In many modern homes the value of graham flour is underestimated. The graham that makes the most delicious and nut-like bread is ground at the mill directly from the farmer's wheat. It will be slightly coarser than the sacked graham procured at the grocery and much sweeter and better flavored. By asking the miller to give you wheat that is called "the first crack" you will have a nutritious and highly delightful breakfast food. See this the same as cream of wheat and you will ask for nothing better.

Hot graham gems are a welcome addition to the breakfast table on a cold morning. In one family where the mother was a splendid cook the writer recalls that when winter approached the main part of the Sunday morning breakfast was always baked potatoes, and graham gems. When you have baked beans for supper try serving hot graham gems or Boston brown bread with them.

Sandwiches from graham loaf and filled with cold roast pork, cheese or jelly, are ideal for the school lunch box.

For those troubled with poor digestion the best bread is made with yeast sponge and part or all graham flour.

The following are a few recipes for various forms of graham bread for a family of six:

Plain graham loaf—1 qt. good buttermilk, 1/4 cup melted shortening, 2 tps. soda and one tsp. baking powder, 1/2 cup molasses or sugar, 1 cup white flour or one egg.

Add one tsp. salt and enough graham flour to make a batter that will

drop clean from the spoon. This will make two loaves baked in individual loaf tins.

For breakfast gems we use a plain loaf recipe and bake in well-greased gem pans in a hot oven.

Nut loaf—2 large cups buttermilk, 1/4 cup melted shortening, 1 tspn. soda and one tspn. baking powder, 1 tspn. salt, 1 tbspn. white sugar or light syrup, 1 cup white flour, 1 egg, 1 cup chopped nut meats, 1 cup chopped raisins.

Add graham flour to make stiff batter, beat well, put in loaf tin, let rise fifteen minutes and bake in medium oven.

Raisin loaf is combined the same as plain loaf with one cup of chopped raisins added.

Boston brown bread—1 qt. good buttermilk, 1/4 cup melted shortening, 1 tspn. salt, 2 tpsns. soda and 1 tspn. baking powder, 1 cup molasses or sorghum, 1 cup white flour, 1 cup corn meal, 1 cup rye meal.

One egg and enough graham flour to make stiff batter. Steam three hours in pudding basin or baking powder cans and bake twenty minutes in medium oven.

Educational Value of Music to Little Children.

With a profound belief in the educational value of music to little children, Mrs. Statia N. Coleman of New York thought that children should first be taught music without note reading.

"Why not," she said, deliberately, "employ the child's natural way of learning until the physical process becomes easy?"

Mrs. Coleman says initiative singing may begin as soon as a child begins to talk, or even before. Simple dancing at three or four results in the cultivation of rhythm. Mrs. Coleman then had the idea of treating her children as little savages. They could under-



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WOMEN JOCKEYS IN ENGLAND
Horse racing for women is becoming an interesting feature of English racing events. The picture shows a winner being led in after a race in which she rode "Bo-Bee."

Double Dose
Motorist—"Why don't you get out of the way?"
Victim—"What! Are you coming back?"

Minard's Liniment for Coughs & Colds.

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Seekers.
The little path climbs to look for the sky,
And the brook goes down in quest of the sea,
And men have sought for Infinity
Apart from the common ways that lie
Where humble toil has birth
And gold is won in the sweat of brow.
But a wise tree stands with its feet
In the earth,
And gathers the stars in a topmost bough.

—Mary Brent Whiteside.

Long Meals.
Thomas A. Edison is not much given to humor—he is far too busy for that—but he has one pet yarn that he is never tired of repeating:
A man from the country one day came to town and put up at a first-class hotel. He went to the office and asked the clerk what were the times of the meals.
"Breakfast, 7 to 11," answered the clerk; "lunch 11 to 3; tea, 3 to 6; dinner, 6 to 8; and supper, 8 to 12."
"What!" shouted the astonished visitor, "then am I going to get time to see the town?"

After Every Meal

WRIGLEYS

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