

SELAH HARRISON.*

Here is a novel which does not throw one into a fever. It does not stir up one's heart. At times it interests but never compels. Still, the reviewer found it more satisfactory upon a second reading than upon the first. The story traces the life of Selah Harrison from lusty boyhood to his death as a worn-out missionary on a South Sea island. The death is not that of a martyr. Yet his life was a martyrdom; every day it was laid upon the altar.

For the setting of the story little can be said in the way of praise. By turns the scene is in the Border Country, in London, in Kent, in a Scotch city, in the island of Taro. But practically nothing of these places enter into the book. You see nothing of Scotland; you feel nothing of the life of London; nothing of the bitter, wretched life of the London poor which is supposed to affect Selah Harrison so powerfully, that God's great pity becomes a saving, converting actuality to him; and to furnish all of the South Sea Island life there is in it, one would need only to read one such book as J. G. Paton's autobiography. There is something of Kentish scenery in it, but it is only "the Weald of Kent on a misty September morning," and of that there is only one glimpse.

The interest of the book centres around two characters, Selah Harrison and Janet McCall, his wife. Another character, Constance Temple, occupies large space, and because of love which she and Selah have for each other, but which is never declared, is intended to take the place of importance next to the hero. But there is so little individuality about her, she is so like a hundred other girls one has met with in books, that she fails utterly to interest. The character of Harrison is well drawn, and his wife Janet is unique. Indeed, so well done are these two, that one finds in them ample justification for the being of the book.

Harrison's home in boyhood, a farm house on the Border, is strongly religious, and the religion is of the stern, uncompromising sort, the "old-fashioned Bible sort." The doctrines of grace were matters of lively belief and daily conversation. It was held that either you belonged to the elect and were saved, or were numbered among the servants of Mammon, who were thought to be found in large numbers just outside the circles in which their life moved. Selah, at the age of seventeen, strongly convinced that he is one of the non-elect, leaves

* "Selah Harrison," by S. MacNaughton. London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd. Toronto: Copp, Clark Co., Ltd.