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The Pioneers

BY KATHARINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD

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CHAPER XLVII.—(Cont'd.)

"You couldn't have married McNab for any reason of choice." Mrs. Cameron was torn between grief, bewilderment and compassion. "Davey is breaking his heart about it, out on the hills somewhere, now. I had to tell him when he came in, for fear—What's to be done about it, Deirdre? Oh, I'm not wanting to blame you. You did it for a good reason, I'm sure, and you love Davey. It's hard on you, Deirdre. You do love him?"

"Yes," Deirdre said slowly.

Mrs. Cameron knelt beside the chair. Her hands trembled on the girl's arm.

"Don't touch me," Deirdre gasped, moving out of the reach of her hands.

"Don't touch me," she whispered again, eyeing her strangely.

"Davey—I'm afraid what he'll do if he sees you," Mrs. Cameron hesitated.

Deirdre sprang out of the chair, her eyes blazing.

"Davey! Davey! It's all Davey with you!" she cried. "You sacrificed father to him. You sent him to that trial. I know now. And Davey—why couldn't he have gone to goal instead? He's young and strong and it wouldn't have mattered so much to him. He's got all his life before him. But father—hadn't he done enough for you? Hasn't he given his eyes for you? Hasn't he worshipped you all these years? I've seen it since I was a child. And is this all you could do for him, send him to the Law Courts to get Davey off, knowing that it would be worse than death to him to have to go to prison again? Oh, you knew what he'd have to suffer in Davey's place."

Mrs. Cameron put her hands over her face.

"You knew he couldn't afford to come under the notice of the law," Deirdre said. "But I shouldn't talk like this."

Her voice trailed wearily.

"Only—I had to choose between father and Davey. McNab knows all the old story. You do, I know. Steve told me. McNab scared the wits out of Steve one day when he was by himself and got all the proofs he wanted, though he seems to have had the facts—most of them, anyway—before. Then he told me—what being at large before the expiration of sentence meant, and what his information would do if he used it, about father, when the trial was on. He said that he wouldn't use it if I'd marry him."

Mrs. Cameron stared at her.

Deirdre went on, her voice dragging as if she could scarcely put into words the pain and trouble of her mind.

"I couldn't let father suffer any more. I couldn't bear to think what it would be for him to go back there, to the island," she said. "He, blind . . . and loving me so . . . and you—"

and both of us willing to sacrifice him to Davey. I could see him going over there, hurt and alone, in the dark, the dear, great, gentle heart of him crying for those he loved to be near him, to hear the sound of their voices, to touch their hands. I couldn't endure it. Oh, I couldn't."

Her head dropped.

"He has made sacrifices all his life. His eyes for you—"

"Don't say that, Deirdre!"

"It's the truth," the girl said fiercely. "That night of the fire he saw the branch falling. It would have

hit you if he had not put up his arm, and it came down on him—on his face—all the red-hot embers. . . ."

Mrs. Cameron uttered a low cry. "And now at the end of his days you took this last scrap of freedom from him. But I wouldn't have it. I knew that the time had come for somebody to do something for him."

There was a few moments' silence.

"Only, after all"—a weary bitterness surged in her voice—"it was no good. McNab was too clever for me. He trapped me—and sold father all the same—and Steve, poor old Steve, too. M'Lughlin took him down to the Port this afternoon. I heard him crying like a baby. When I asked McNab why he had broken his word to me, he said—"a little sick laughter struggled from her—"that, blind as father was, he knew he'd have to reckon with him for having taken me, if he ever came back to the Wirree."

She sank back in the chair, shivering and sobbing.

Mrs. Cameron leant towards her.

"Don't touch me!" Deirdre shrank from her. "I haven't told you all yet. McNab locked me in a room when he knew that I knew what he'd done. It was when he came to me there and called me his wife—I killed him."

Mrs. Cameron fell back from her.

"Oh, I didn't mean to kill him," the girl cried distractedly. "He came near me. I told him not to, but he did. He talked of his rights. I hit at him . . . to keep him away from me . . . with something that was lying on the table. I don't know what it was, but it was heavy—and he fell down."

I knew he was dead by the way he lay there, without moving—and then I ran out of the room and came here. Oh, I didn't mean to do it—but I'm not sorry it's done—that he is dead and can do no more harm to any of us. He killed Conal. And it was he that shot at Davey. He would have again, too. He was afraid of Davey—when he would do . . . when he found out about father and me."

She was sobbing breathlessly; her hands went out before her with a desperate, despairing gesture. She moved towards the door.

"Where are you going? What are you going to do, Deirdre?"

Mrs. Cameron followed her.

"I don't know!" the girl stood quivering by the doorpost. "Only I must go. They may come from the Wirree and find me here. And I don't want to be hanged—that's what they do with people who have done what I've done, isn't it? I want to go. Davey mustn't see me. It's no good. No good! There would be the great grief between us always . . . and as long as I lived—to the day of my death—I'd be on the other side of it, with my arms out to him. Oh, you mustn't keep me. Can't you see it's best that I should go . . . now . . . like this, before . . ."

"You're not thinking of doing any harm to yourself, Deirdre?"

The anguished eyes of the woman beside her reached the girl through the maze and terror of her thoughts. They calmed the tumult within her.

"The Long Gully," she said simply, wearily, "the mists are so deep in it to-night, and there would be no waking in the morning."

Mrs. Cameron took her hand.

"You say I've never done anything for your father, Deirdre. I want to do something for him now. Come back and listen to me for a moment."

She led the girl back to the chair, and forced her into it.

"But they'll be coming for me soon," Deirdre cried fretfully, looking back at the door.

She hardly heard what Mrs. Cameron was saying for awhile. Her tired, bright eyes wandered restlessly up and down the room. The pain in her head prevented her thinking.

"Deirdre darling," Mrs. Cameron said, her voice trembling, "there's not a man or woman in the country would not say you were justified. And no woman is better able to understand than I am. I'm not afraid for you . . . and there's no one I'd rather have for Davey's wife than you. You were willing to sacrifice yourself. But when treachery had been proved against you—there was that within you would not let evil come near you."

"Do you mean . . . you'd be satisfied for Davey to have me?" Deirdre asked.

"Yes."

Mrs. Cameron's eyes were on hers. "You'd not be throwing it up at me that I . . . that I did this?" Deirdre inquired. "And that father—"

"No," Mrs. Cameron's voice was very low. "Because if I had been served as your father was—I'd have been a convict too."

In the shock of what she had said, Deirdre forgot her own trouble.

"You!" she whispered.

"That's what I wanted to tell you so long . . . and, nobody else knows," Mrs. Cameron said. "It's because I

think it may help you, Deirdre, now that your soul is in the deep waters. I want you to know—that something like what has happened to you happened to me, long ago. Only I had less excuse."

Her face was torn with grief; she turned from the girl, overwhelmed by the flood-tide of dark memories.

"Oh, I can't think of it without all the agony again," she cried.

And after a moment continued: "I didn't want to bring shame on my people by having it known . . . I had been the cause of death to a man . . . but the weight was on my soul. I had heard of people escaping public trial by condemning themselves to transportation. It was the only way, I could have any peace of mind. I thought—taking on myself the punishment other women had got for doing what I did. But it was never as bad for me as for them. Davey's father saw me on the wharf among the emigrant women, and he wanted to marry me. There was a Government bounty—thirty pounds, I think it was—given to married couples coming to the colony, and he wanted the money to begin with in the new country. I told him why I was going out, and he was willing to take me. There were terrible days of fear among all the rough people I found myself with . . . till he came. I was grateful to him, and swore to be a good and faithful wife to him."

"I've not spoken of this since then, Deirdre. I'm telling you because I want you not to throw your life away—not to waste it. I know I was wrong. There was this difference between what you did and what I did. I was not in a corner, fighting for my life as you were. I did not mean to take life. I did not mean to. It was an accident, really. Right was on my side, but I was angry, or the accident would never have happened. I have suffered from knowing that. All these years have made little difference. That's why I was always wanting to help convicts and prisoners in the old days—and it angered Davey's father so. I felt that they were suffering what I ought to have been suffering too. . . ."

(To be concluded.)

The Hidden Heart.

I hid my heart away,

It was my own,

All of its hidden stores

Were mine alone

I feared a thief might come

Prowling in stealth

To rob my treasury,

Steal all my wealth

Came Life, the trader, by

Wishing to trade;

Bright goods he offered me

That would not fade.

So Life, the trader, said—

Ah, they shone fair—

I brought my treasure forth

To buy a share!

Passed Life, the trader, by

With all my gold—

I was quite satisfied

With what he sold.

Ah, but they did not last,

Those goods so bright:

Soon passed their beauty—soon

Passed my delight.

Again I hide my heart,

Empty, alas!

Left they should pity me,

All they who pass!

—Roselle Mercier Montgomery.

A Wrong Impression.

A young man, becoming engaged, was anxious to present his fiancée with a ring appropriately inscribed.

Being at a loss what to have engraved upon it, he asked his father for advice.

"Well," said the latter, "put 'When this you see, remember me.'"

A few days later the young woman was surprised to receive a beautiful ring with this inscription: "When this you see, remember father."



A DIFFERENCE ABOUT A BIRD

"Here, Frenchy, that's no good. If you kill the goose, you'll lay our golden reparation eggs?"

"John, that bird isn't going to lay any golden eggs for us. It is only going to hatch more hawks."

—From the Sydney Bulletin.

About the House

EDUCATED BY A GRINDSTONE.

"I'll be fifty-seven to-morrow," smiled Mrs. Plaegar, rocking on the verandah of her white-and-green farm house, "and it seems as though it were only a few years ago when the boys were small."

She sighed again.

"Those were the years when it was hard pulling. My husband died when the children were very young. The farm was heavily mortgaged and we had to stretch the pennies until they fairly squealed. My friends told me I ought to work in my spare time. Well, a farmer's wife hasn't much spare time and besides, who could I have done? I could not sew. My fingers had become too clumsy with farm work to handle a needle delicately and work of other kinds would demand that I leave the farm which I could not do."

"Well, things went on for a while. I continued to do the manual work, to which I was accustomed. I had always liked a man's work better than a woman's and I had quite a knack for handling tools."

"One tool I liked especially was an old grindstone in the barnyard on which I sharpened my knives. One day a neighbor, viewing with envy my shining and keen steel knives said, 'I wonder if you would be willing to sharpen my knives? You do such splendid work and I would gladly pay you.'"

"I consented and that was the beginning of a little business. Other women brought me their knives and scissors and I charged according to the size of the utensils. I used to send the boys to 'gather them in' for me and sometimes they would bring home three or four dozen which they had labeled with the names of the owners. The next day they would return them, bright and sharp. And how farm women need keen tools!"

"As my somewhat unique business increased, I bought a polishing machine and I soon received more orders than ever. One order which pleased me especially was from a hotel. They told me their employees were most deficient at polishing steel knives and, if I did good work, they would be willing to give all their work to me. With housewives, too, this task is a dreaded one, and my bank began to increase, accordingly. I followed up every opportunity and, of course, business brought more business."

"My business never forced me to neglect my farm duties. I always did the work on my own premises where I could oversee the work of the farm hands."

"The boys say they owe their college education to the old grindstone and that is perhaps the reason we never parted with it. To us, it shall always be a much loved and honored member of the family."

A "SERVANTLESS" HOME.

Ours is a "servantless house" and labor-saving devices have made this possible. First, the kitchen was rearranged, an unsightly pantry was converted into an attractive breakfast room, cupboards and cabinet built in kitchen, with a place for everything, including the fireless cooker.

A small sink was replaced with a large one, placed at the right height. A slop sink was removed and a long drain-board added, under which is a cupboard for kettles, pans, lids and pressure cooker. Also a drawer for linen, closet for garbage pail, shelf under sink for cleaners, soap and dishpan.

Above the sink is a shelf convenient for placing jars during canning or

plates for a party. Below are hooks for dippers, small pans, soap shaker, fly swatter, scraper, bottle, vegetable and glass brushes, also homemade rack for knives, forks, spoons and spatula.

A rack of wooden spoons is placed at end of drain board with towel arms below.

On the shelf above the stove I keep salt, pepper, matches and a box in which to put burnt matches and scraps of paper to be burned in the furnace later.

I keep steel wool for cleaning aluminum and glass baking dishes. I wash dishes in hot soap suds, place in a wire drainer and scald both sides. They dry perfectly without wiping.

A homemade tea wagon conveys the food to the dining room and the dishes to the kitchen.

Telephone on the farthest wall of the dining room was removed to a desk near the kitchen door, thus eliminating several steps when the 'phone is used and enabling me to sit while talking.

A vacuum cleaner is one of my greatest labor-savers. Then came dust mops, wall brush, chemically treated duster for baseboards and dustless dust cloths made of old stockings and a little furniture polish.

A long-handled dust pan saves stooping. With stationary tubs, running water, a power washer and wringer, a large washing is done in a few hours. The wide ironing board was made to order; a small clothes sprinkler in a bottle soon prepares the clothes for the electric iron.

An extension telephone upstairs costs but little extra a month and saves many steps. A closet upstairs contains dustless mops, dust cloths, soap and cleaning fluids.

Other labor-savers that cost only a few cents are egg poacher, dish mop, long-handled fork, can opener, grater, mixing bowls, funnels, tea ball, potato ricer, egg beater and measuring cups.

A pressure cooker saves time, labor and fuel in cooking combination meals and canning vegetables, fruit and meat.

A homemade fireless cooker cooks the meal while I work or motor.

It is apparatus of this sort combined with common sense in house planning that makes the "servantless house" possible and the mistress of the home is not wearing herself out or useless annoyances that arise in housekeeping problems.—Mrs. G. E. S.

TO PATCH OVERALLS.

Since the price of denim and overalls continues high, it behooves the thrifty housemother to make each pair of these work garments serve its full time. Usually the front of the legs, especially the knees, receive the hardest wear, this part often reaching a "holey" stage while the remainder of the garment is still stout and capable of considerable wear. Instead of unsightly and laboriously applied hand patches, a neater and more durable piece of work can be done on the sewing machine.

First rip the inside leg seam from hem to hem, in order to get the garment under the foot of the machine. As this is a continuous seam, the ripping, as a rule, can easily be accomplished by cutting through the hem at the bottom of the leg and pulling on each side of the seam, as the stitches have been weakened by wear and washing. If the stitches hold, rip the seam with the discarded blade of a safety razor.

From the unworn portions from the back of the legs of a discarded pair of overalls—or from new denim, if no partly-worn material is at hand—cut patches almost the width of the leg and long enough to extend from the crotch to well below the knee, taking in all the worn portion. Pin the patches in place—the experienced seamstress will find basting unnecessary—turn under the edges at top, bottom and outside of leg, and stitch in place with number 40 thread. The fourth side of the patch is taken up in the inside leg seam.

Starting at the bottom of the leg, stitch up the leg seam from hem to hem in an ordinary raw seam, keeping to the outer row of former stitching to give a neat appearance to the finished work. This seam can not be felled on the ordinary household machine, nor is this necessary, as the width of the old seam is sufficient to prevent pulling out if coarse thread is used.

Health Before Beauty.

Two Irishmen who had not met for years ran across each other.

"Long time since we met, Clancy, isn't it? Great things have happened since then," said the first.

"Yes, indeed. Look at myself. Sure I'm married I am," replied Clancy.

"You don't tell me? Have you any family?" asked O'Grady.

"Faith and I have that. I've a fine healthy boy, and the neighbors say he's the picture of me."

O'Grady looked at Clancy, who wasn't built on the line of a prize beauty.

"Ah, well, what's the harm so long as the child's healthy?"

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The discovery of X-rays was a lucky accident. Professor Rontgen, who died recently, was certainly not searching for them when in 1895 his eyes for the first time beheld a light more powerful than any ever known before.

He was experimenting in a darkened room with a Crookes tube, stimulated internally from an induction coil and covered by a shield of black cardboard when he became conscious of a faint, greenish, flickering light on a paper which he had painted with a fluorescent chemical preparation.

The value of this ray to medicine has been incalculable. Prior to its discovery the position of an internal injury had to be guessed, and a patient might even have had to be cut open so that the surgeon might see exactly where the mischief lay.

Now the Rontgen ray can disclose the exact position of the broken bone or foreign matter.

The rays have caused the death of many experimenters since their discovery by Rontgen, but, fortunately, those days are past, and the X-ray is doing ever-increasing work in the service of man.

Courtesy Misunderstood.

Boy Scout (small but polite)—"May I accompany you across the street, madam?"

Old Lady—"Certainly you may, my lad. How long have you been writing here for somebody to take you across?"

Covetousness is always filling a bottomless vessel.

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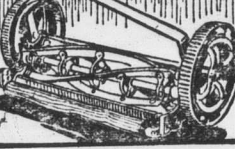
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