The Pioneers

BY KATHARINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD

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Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Donald and Mary Cameron are carving a home out of the Australian wilds. When little David was four months old his father set off to Port Southern for fresh supplies. On the fourth day two gaunt and ragged men, one of them wounded, entered the hut. Mary offered them unstinted hospitality and heard the story of their escape from the Island prison and the treachery of McNab who had promised to befriend them—at a price. Clothed and provided with food, they departed, the tall one hoping to repay the debt. Mary refused to aid her husband in putting the police on their track. Ten years of industry have brought prosperity to the Cameronsl While making a tour of the neighborhood advocating the establishment of a school, Mary meets again one of the refugees of long ago, Daniel Farrel, who is appointed schoolmaster. Three years later he brings his motherless daughter Deirdre, Davey's playmate, to Mrs. Cameron for housewifely instruction. The summer that Davey left school bush fires threatened the settlement.

CHAPTER XIV.

When Deirdre returned from the pool, where she had left Lass, the crate of fowls, and the cows with the old dog standing guard over them, Mrs. Cameron was already beating an arrow of flame that had struck the paddock on the hill-top, and Jenny on the other edge of the fences was also beating.

Darkness had fallen. The glare of the fire was visible above the thick standing wall of haze.

Deirdre saw a glittering line break through the grass at a little distance from Mrs. Cameron, and seizing one of the green branches Jenny had thrown down in the centre of the paddock, beat the fire until it went out. Other threads of fire appeared near her, and she followed them along the fence, slashing with the branch until they died down, leaving blacken-earth and breaths of virulent blue smoke.

"Stay near the top of the hill, Deirdre," Mrs. Cameron called, "and watch to see if there's a break on the front clearing, or the pool side, or near the sheds."

Then the fire began to show in a dozen places at once, wriggling lizard-like through the dry, paley-gleaming grass. Beating became automatic, an unflagging lashing and thrashing, and watch had to be kept that the enemy was not attacking in another part of the clearing. The blackened earth smoked under a dead flame one moment, the next a spark kindled and wispish fire was running through the grass again. Far down the hillside, through the smoke mists, to Deirdre on the top, Mrs. Cameron and Jenny looked wraith-like in their white cotton dresses.

The fire in the trees, of which these swift, silent runners in the grass were fore-warners, was still some distance off. But they could hear the crash of falling trees, the rush and roar of the flames in the tangled leafage, shrill cries of the wild creatures of the bush, the blare and bellowing screams of cattle.

Mrs. Cameron's light skirt caught fire. Jenny beat it out with her hands. She and Mrs. Cameron fell back a moment.

The glare lighted the whole of the clearing. In the valley flashing shafts of flame could be seen. They leapt athwart clouds of smoke which drove, billowing, across the sky, sprayed by showers of sparks.

"Mrs. Cameron!" Deirdre screamed warningly as a fire-maddened steer leapt into the paddock and careered across it into the darkness on the other side.

The heat was suffocating. The heavy, acrid smoke in their lungs made their heads reel. Deirdre was fighting a brilliant patch of flames half-way across the paddock when Mrs. Cameron called to her.

"It's no good, child!" she said. Her face was dim with smoke, her hands burnt and blackened. "It's no good trying to do any more, we must go now."

They ran from the hill-top to the house, Mrs. Cameron caught up her bundle, Jenny the blue vases and the spinning wheel, and Deirdre, taking Socks from the stable in which he was beginning to whinny with fear, led him down the track in front of the house. They were half way across the clearing when Mrs. Cameron came to a standstill. Flames had eaten their way up the paddock and lay across the track.

"We're cut off," she said.

"What can we do" Deirdre asked. "There's no time to lose."

Jenny screamed, dancing up and down, beside herself with terror and excitement: "We're cut off! Cut off!"

She dropped on of the vases she was carrying and it broke in a thousand pieces.

"I don't know," Mrs. Cameron said slowly. Her eyes wandered to the broken pieces of the vase.

For a moment Deirdre's brain was paralyzed too. She stood staring down the track. All the terrible stories of the fires, of people who had been burnt to death, flashed into her mind.

A shout was raised behind them.

"It's father!" she cried.

The Schoolmaster dashed round the corner of the house. His face was blackened and had angry weals where the fire had lashed it. His eyebrows and beard were singed close to his head. At a glance he took in the situation. His horse with head hung was blowing like a bellows.

"Davey's just behind me!" he gasped, looking at Mrs. Cameron. "Mr. Cameron and he didn't know the fires were making this way till I told them; then he sent Davey. I came . . . to give him a hand. Never thought we'd get here—miles of fire across the road. Get a couple of blankets, Deirdre, and we'll make a dash for the creek."

Deirdre ran back to the house, tore the blankets from the beds inside and threw them on to the verandah. He dipped three of them in a bucket of water that stood by the kitchen door, wrapped her in one, and Mrs. Cameron and Jenny in the others.

Davey swung into the yard on an all but spent horse.

"Keep her going, Davey," the Schoolmaster cried, "and get down to the water. I'll look after your mother. Deirdre, you take Jenny up behind you. Fly along and let down the slip panel. Socks'll stand the grass fire if you keep him at it."

Davey and Deirdre dashed across the smouldering and smoking paddock, putting their horses blindly towards the corner of the fence where the slip-rails were already down.

Trees on the edge of the clearing behind the house were already roaring, wrapped in the smoke and flaming mantle of the fire. A shower of sparks thrown up by a falling tree scattered over the stable and barns.

A hoarse yelping, the cackling of fowls and the wild terrified lowing of the cows, came from the pool. Davey rode into it, hustled the cows into the centre, and took the old sheep-dog up on his saddle. Socks, with Deirdre and Jenny on his back, splashed in after him. The Schoolmaster and Mrs. Cameron followed a few moments later. He had caught up her spinning wheel and she was clutching her bundle and the other blue vase.

CHAPTER XV.

The fire did not reach the trees above the pool till it had swept the orchards, sheds, and house on the brow of the hill.

Mrs. Cameron watched it devouring them. Every line of the sheds and barns, the eaves and corners of the home that Donald and she had made, was struck against the glare.

The stables fell with a crash. Flames went up from the new weather-board corner of the house.

"It's like watching someone you love die slowly," she cried.

A breath of wind brought a shower of blackened and burning leaves. By a flank movement the fire was sweeping towards them. The wind springing up gave it zest; it sprang in long brilliant leaps over the quivering tops of the trees. Davey and the Schoolmaster dropped from their horses. Mrs. Cameron, Deirdre and Jenny crouched in the water till the fury of the flames had passed over their heads. Davey had his hands full to keep the cows from breaking away, mad with terror. Socks, the most restive and mettlesome of the horses, started and whinnied as burning leaves struck him. Deirdre threw her wet blanket over him and cowered next to him under it, murmuring soothingly: "There now! Steady, old boy! Steady, my pretty!"

The Schoolmaster held his own horse and Lass, startled out of her peaceful phlegm by the terrifying roar and heat.

Even when the flames had raced on over the tree-tops it was not safe to leave the pool. The men and women in it stood in water to their waists for hours, a red haze enveloping them. The blankets dried in a few minutes. The bush behind them through which the fire had passed showed trees stripped of their greenery and outlined with glowing embers. Some of the dead trees beside the pool burned dully, and fluttering red and blackened leaves drifted from the saplings.

Once Jenny had to dip to her neck as a spark of fire caught her dress.

"Look out, Mrs. Cameron!" Deirdre cried sharply, hearing a crack and seeing a glowing bough waver over Davey's mother.

The Schoolmaster brushed Mrs. Cameron aside, and the bough struck his face. Deirdre uttered a low cry. Davey, too, had seen the Schoolmaster's movement

"Are you hurt, Mr. Farrel?" he asked anxiously.

"No, it isn't anything at all!" the Schoolmaster replied brusquely, with a half laugh.

Mrs. Cameron herself did not realize what had happened.

To the glare of the fire and the hot red mists, a few hours before dawn, succeeded a heavy darkness, lit only by the columns of dead trees burning to ember.

The night seemed endless. When the first wavering gleam came in the eastern sky it revealed the blackened fringe of the trees, their green waving draperies scorched and fire-eaten, where the fire, like a ravening monster, had half-consumed them and passed on.

The wind had swept the haze and the smoke before it. The bosom of the earth lay bare of the light, dry, wanly-golden grass that had covered it; and from the paddocks and blackened forest thin spirals and breaths of bluish smoke rose and drifted. The peaceful space of trees and the summer-dried grasses about the Ayrmuir homestead were gone. Charred outlines of sheds and what of the house was still left, stood on the brow of the hill.

In the wan light, the pool mirrored the desolation and the haggard and weary men and women who stood in it. Chilled and cramped from being in the water so long, exhausted with the anxieties of the night, they ventured warily back to the still hot earth.

Mrs. Cameron's eyes turned first to her son. His face was grimed with smoke and leaf smuts. There were angry red flushes on it where scraps of burning foliage had struck him. Deirdre's and Jenny's clothes hung to them, scorched and dripping; there were burnt holes in Mrs. Cameron's own dress. Farrel and Davey were drenched to the skin.

The Schoolmaster had tied a handkerchief over his face, covering one eye.

In the first light of the dawn Deirdre exclaimed when she saw it.

"Father," she cried, "you're hurt."

"I'm all right," he said irritably.

She went over to him and lifted the handkerchief.

His face was curiously wrung with pain and blanched beneath the tan and smoke-grime. A clammy sweat beaded on his forehead.

"Hold your tongue, Deirdre," he muttered. "It's only a bit of a burn."

Mrs. Cameron was gazing at the ruins of her home.

"What is it?" she asked, hearing his voice, low as it was pitched. "Oh, you've got a bad burn?"

She went towards him, distress in her eyes.

"It's nothing at all; it doesn't matter!" He edged away from her so that she should not see. "When you and Davey are fixed up, Mrs. Cameron, Deirdre and I must get along and see how Steve and the school fared."

They found some flour, bread and tea in stone jars among the ruins of the kitchen. Davey milked the cows. Mrs. Cameron and Jenny built a fire in the yard, and when they had all breakfasted on the scorched bread and some tea, Mrs. Cameron wanted to put flour on the Schoolmaster's burn. But he said that it was not worth bothering about and would have nothing done for it.

(To be continued.)

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About the House

Whereabouts of the Kitchen Sink.

Certain it is that the sink is one of the biggest savers of time, strength, and labor in the home—when properly located—and one of the greatest burdens when missing or of the wrong type.

Strange as it may seem, thousands of women are struggling along with no sink at all or, at best, a very poor and badly placed one.

The size of the family and of the kitchen determines the size of the sink, but a short sink with ample table and shelf room near it may be more convenient than a long sink. Two smaller sinks, one for the table dishes near the dining room and the other for general use in the kitchen, are very convenient.

The material should be the best available, non-absorbent of grease as well as of moisture, and there should be no cracks or square corners to increase the work of keeping it clean. A wooden sink, even when it receives an annual coat of paint, will absorb moisture and grease which attracts insects and is likely to be swarming with bacteria and to "sour" and have an unpleasant odor. Even drainboards of wood are not best, unless they have a waterproof finish of varnish, oil or paint. If a wooden sink is necessary, it is better to have it metal lined, provided the sheets of metal, which is usually tin, zinc, galvanized iron, copper or lead, are soldered where they are joined and all parts of the sink, including the tops of the sides, are covered with the metal, so that there is no chance for the wood to absorb moisture. Another plan is to have a cement sink built into a wooden frame and lined with sheet copper or tin to make a smooth surface.

Enameled-iron sinks are smooth, last well with careful use, and may be easily kept clean, but they are more expensive than iron. Porcelain sinks are similar to the enameled ones, but their price is almost prohibitive. Perhaps the ideal plan, if cost is not to be considered, would be to have an enameled or porcelain sink for the tableware in the kitchen or pantry near the dining room and an iron sink or soapstone sink for the heavier kitchen ware.

The double sinks, with one basin for washing and another for draining dishes, are very convenient, but unfortunately they are relatively expensive. A small sink with a rubber stopper for its escape pipe may be used as a dish pan.

If possible there should be a wide shelf or drain board on each side of the sink on the level with the rim of the latter, one to receive soiled dishes and the other clean ones. Some housekeepers have these covered with zinc. As in all other places where it is used, the metal must be neatly fitted and closely fastened down, so as not to leave any chance for loose, rough edges, or to provide breeding places for insects or a lodging place for grease and dirt.

If there is no place for permanent drain boards, sliding or hinged shelves may be used. A right-handed person usually holds the dish in the left hand while washing or wiping it, and the dishcloth, dish mop, or towel, in the right hand. It is convenient, therefore, to have the dishes move from right to left as they pass from dish-pan to rinsing pan, and from rinsing pan to drainer and tray. This should be kept in mind and provision made for soiled dishes at right and for a drain board at the left of the sink.

Make Your Own Candied Fruit.

Fruit which is to be candied should be washed, peeled or pared if necessary, and then cut or sliced. Drop fruit into boiling water for two or three minutes, drain well and cover with a syrup made by boiling together one pound of sugar for each pound of fruit, with one cup of water. Boil the fruit rapidly in this syrup for fifteen minutes. Remove from the fire and allow to stand over night. The next morning boil for ten or fifteen minutes again. Repeat the heating and cooling for four to six days, according to how rapidly the water is drawn out and the syrup absorbed. When the fruit is transparent and bright lift it from the syrup and dry in the sun or in a cool oven.

The Off Day.

It had been one of the days, known to all teachers, when a spirit of restlessness and stupidity seems to sweep the schoolroom. Of course, Miss Bailey said to herself, no human being could be expected to teach Emily Harrow decimal fractions. But for Ray Farrol and Julie Shallop to fall when both of them were as keen as razors! And for the whole class to be indifferent through history and geography!

It was of no use to keep the special offenders in; if she kept them in she would have to keep the whole room, and she did not feel like doing that. Her only hope was that the morrow would be a better day.

They were all gone at last. With a quivering sigh of weariness Miss Bailey dropped down at her desk. She wanted to think things out. Was there really a difference in the children? Or was she getting old and "stale"? The thought sent a stab of fear to her heart. But her supervisor had given her special commendation only last month. She couldn't have changed in a month.

The opening of the door to the schoolroom made her turn. And then a terrible sinking feeling swept through her. It was just what anyone might expect of a day like that; Emily Harrow's mother was coming to take her to task!

Miss Bailey rose automatically. The visitor looked at her half shyly, half eagerly. "Miss Bailey, I am Emily Harrow's mother. I have been meaning to come to see you for weeks, but we've had illness. I wanted to thank you—Mr. Harrow and I both do—for all you have done for Emily."

"I!" Miss Bailey gasped.

Emily's mother smiled, a clear courageous smile. "You've been so patient. You see, we know that Emily will always have a hard time with many studies. And there have been teachers who have hurt her so. She isn't dull in other things, only in books. She is really a wonderful little housekeeper, to say nothing of being the dearest little daughter in the world. That's why we think of her teacher as one of our especial friends. Could you come to dinner Friday night?"

Mrs. Harrow went out in a few minutes. The teacher's discouraged weariness was gone. It was a beautiful world with real fathers and mothers in it. And to-morrow would be a better day.

How Children Can Be Trained to Love Music.

The educational possibilities of the phonograph are coming to be realized more and more, particularly in the kindergarten and public schools. Nowadays a phonograph is part of the equipment of most up-to-date schools and more or less organized courses in music appreciation are included in the training. But a phonograph in the home also offers many opportunities for developing and training the child mind that are frequently unsuspected. Several of the phonograph companies are devoting considerable time and expense to this phase of the work and there are many records now available which parents will find interesting and valuable for children.

It is a well-established fact that music makes its deepest and most lasting impression in the early years of childhood. The parents who know what music makes the most genuine appeal and how to use it at this period will be amply rewarded for their efforts. Among young children the ear is very susceptible and easily trained, and neglect at this important period of growth can never be fully made up by any amount of musical education in later years.

The question is often asked: How early should a child begin the study of music (with particular reference to learning to play some instrument)? Of more vital importance to the child's future welfare is the question: How early should the child hear music, and what kind of music should he hear?

A Reproof That Missed Fire.

The young wife entered the kitchen rather nervously and after hesitating for a few seconds said to the cook, "O cook, I must really speak to you. My husband is always complaining about the cooking. One day it is the soup, and the next day it is the fish, and the third day it is the roast; in fact, it's always something or other."

The cook replied with feeling, "Well mum, I'm sorry for you. It must be awful to live with a gentleman like that."

Keep Minard's Liniment in the house.

Find of Amber.

The first amber in large quantities discovered on the North American Continent is that recently found in the hundreds of tons of culm from collieries in the Nicola Valley of British Columbia.

Birmingham Eng., was the first home of the steel pen.

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There's a row of little yards,
There are fragrant posies growing,
And little fences painted white,
And someone busy sewing.

There's a lane of swaying trees
And the happy squirrels roaming.
There's somebody who sits and rocks
A baby in the gloaming.

There is nowhere in the world
Where ambition burns so keenly,
Where everyone's ideals are high,
And life is lived so cleanly.

As this street of little homes
Where each one lives for the other,
Where baby is the king of all—
The gilding star his mother!

—Anne Campbell.

His Preference.

Father—"Which would you rather have, a little brother or a little sister?"

Little Jake—"If it's all the same to you, papa, I'd rather have a white rabbit with red eyes."

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Work of the Archaeological Explorer

People often wonder how the explorers of ancient ruins in Egypt, Palestine, Mexico, and elsewhere make their discoveries; how they know where to look for what they find, and how they know that anything may be found where they search.

The work of the Harvard University Boston Museum of Fine Arts expedition to Ethiopia, which has spent 10 years in Egypt an archaeological exploration and is still working there, is an example of how such explorations are carried out. Its search has resulted in the discovery, in an obscure village beyond the borders of Egypt, on the banks of the Nile River, of a great number of tombs which were found to contain the history of 26 generations of Ethiopian kings who ruled over Egypt, and the recovery from beneath the deeply drifted sands of material buried and lost to human knowledge for thousands of years, revealing the arts and crafts of this lost civilization.

The explorer comes upon a mound or series of mounds, of drifted sand in the desert in a region known to have been inhabited by ancient races. He sets his trained workmen to clearing away the sand, after first having made photographs of the undisturbed site. As soon as a tomb or pyramid is uncovered, the stairway leading into the tomb is the first to be cleared. This had been filled in after the funeral with the clean debris left after the excavation of the rock-cut chambers and the building of the pyramid. Then the plunderers came, at some time or other, and dug a hole in the clean filling of each stairway, this hole afterward becoming stopped up partly with the things that the grave robbers threw away as valueless, and partly with drift sand. The robbers were naturally after the gold and jewels they knew had been buried in the royal tombs.

"It is easy to distinguish between the original filling and the debris of the thieves' tunnel. The objects found in the latter usually came from the royal burial chamber and, in the records of expeditions, have to be carefully distinguished from other objects. When the doorway at the foot of the stairs has been reached, the workmen begin to clear the pyramid above, or another stairway, until the record of the blocks and measurements of the stairs have been made. After that, the sand is removed, leaving only about 8 inches of the floor debris intact. Whatever is found in the sand and is usually little enough—is considered as having washed in from the thieves' tunnel outside. When the sand is cleared then the serious and difficult work of examining the floor debris and removing it bit by bit begins, and for this only the most skilled Egyptian workers are employed, under the supervision of a member of the expedition. This floor dirt is to the Egyptologist what pay dirt is to the gold miner.

Miracle Water in England Works Wonderful Cures.

"Miracle" water, said to contain the elixir of life, has been discovered in an old well in the little Essex village of Vange. Stories of wonderful cures effected by the water have caused pilgrimages from many parts of the country, people arriving on foot, with teams and in luxurious motor cars.

A titled woman who drank less than two glasses said that it made her feel Better! A millionaire who drank freely the well took a jug of the water away and left the humble owner of the well that if the water did what was claimed it would do it, he would send a man down to do another jug's work.

An average of more than 500 visitors daily have been visiting the place, carrying every conceivable kind of receptacle and all are served free.

The "miracle" water was discovered during a drought by an elderly old farmer named George Murrell. He had recourse to a puddle which seemed to dry up and used the water for making tea. It has a curious but a few hours after drinking Murrell felt a strange new vigor within him. The next day he drank more and said, "I feel better than I have for twenty years."

Murrell told about his discovery to a seventy-year-old neighbor named Charles Cash, who found that the water came from a well. He drank some of it and experienced the same sensations as Murrell.

On the advice of a doctor he was sent to a public analyst in London, who discovered an amazing combination of medical properties which he says, are not equaled even by the famous springs in Bohemia. The pilgrimages began. People suffering from rheumatism, dyspepsia, gout, skin diseases drank the water and claimed that they were cured. There were many cures reported among them. The farmers have been unable to make a charge, but they will do so as they think the spring was sent by God.

Meanwhile the village is crowded and tents have been ordered to accommodate the visitors.

Worry and fear destroy memory and disintegrate almost all the mental faculties. Faith, hope, courage, determination, are positive qualities without which the mind is a chaos of unwilling impulses.

"Stormy weather makes me tired," complained the umbrella. "Every time it rains I am used up."