



ON THE other hand, Miss Willa S. Cather in "O Pioneers!" (O title!!) is neither a skilled storyteller nor the least bit of an artist. And yet by the end of the book, something has happened in the reader's mind that leaves him grateful. The tale is one of a mixed community of pioneer farmers, Swedes, Bohemians, French, and others, and focusses itself on a girl who when orphaned achieves success with her farm and her lover. There isn't a vestige of "style" as such: for page after page one is dazed at the ineptness of the medium and the triviality of the incidents. But at last, if one surrenders, there is a kind of cumulative effect — one feels that one has really lived in this simple community with the heroine, Alexandra, and shared her griefs, struggles, and satisfactions, which finally attain a dramatic interest. And the secret of this is the persistence throughout of a single fine quality of the author — her extraordinary sincerity.

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