

down into the clear waters that reflected back my great ugly face, the ripples distorting the features, and making me look worse than I did, when I saw another face smiling up out of the waters, and then I felt a strong arm around me, and I looked up at John, and he kissed me for the first time in his life. Then John asked me something in so low a voice that I didn't hardly hear it; but I guessed what it was, and laid my head down on his breast, and heard his great heart beating against my cheek. And then we walked up to the house together, John's arm around me. And mother looked up over her spectacles when we went in, and smiled; and we went and knelt down beside her, and she placed her hands upon our heads, and whispered: "God bless you, my children."

---

### HEROINES.

BY AUGUSTA H. WORTHEN.

NOR such commonplace affairs as Joan of Arc or Grace Darling, but the heroines of novels and newspaper stories—it is of their wrongs that I propose to treat; for them I offer my plea. Now the spirit of reform seems to be very active in the world. Reformers everywhere are so numerous, that it seems as if every kind of abuse and wrong-doing were in a fair way to be raked open. Almost every community can boast of one or more of those energetic individuals, whose special mission it is to right other people's wrongs. Yet I have waited in vain to see some bold spirit stand forth in defence of that class of unfortunates, whose name is placed at the head of this article. I do not use the term *unfortunate* without consideration.

Of course if these persons are, in any degree, ambitious of distinction, it must be gratifying to be brought before the public, attractive and beautiful as they are invariably made to appear, and, in most cases, dressed in costly and becoming apparel, for which they neither toil nor spin. Still further to encourage woman's vanity, there is the author ever at hand, ready to point out their manifold perfections. But can this alone be considered sufficient compensation for all they are compelled to suffer? I do not believe it can.

In the first place, it must become tedious to be obliged constantly to maintain that high standard of excellence which is expected from one who is always before the public. And it is really no light thing to fall alive into the hands of a story-writer; you can never exactly

calculate the amount of misery he will bring upon your head; for he is both cruel and inconsistent. He singles out his victim, introduces her to the world, sets forth her merits, enlists every one's sympathies in her favor, and then proceeds to torment her in every possible way. For this purpose he employs the whole force of his ingenuity and malice. If she is rich, he squanders her estate—no reckless spendthrift could ever make money fly faster than he does. If she has a fond, doting father, ever ready to gratify her slightest wish, the author manages to obtain a private interview with him, and lo! The old gentleman's heart is turned to stone. Has she been left to the tender mercies of a guardian? Straightway, with the author's full knowledge and consent—nay, at his instigation even, he seeks to force upon her affections his graceless and unacceptable nephew. Now the author knows, even if the guardian does not, that her affections are no longer under her control, that she has already made choice of a lover every way suited to her taste; is it not the height of cruelty, then, for him to give his countenance to such a scheme?

He contrives to separate her from her lover, distracts her mind by whispering that he will probably transfer his affections to some fair one nearer at hand, and so the plot thickens. About this time various friends become distrustful, and give her the cold shoulder. One attached servant, however, remains faithful; without her aid our heroine would occasionally be brought to the level of a commonplace drudge.

You might suppose she had now suffered enough to render her perfect in all the Christian graces; but such was not the object of the discipline she has received. She never needed it, in fact, for she, unlike other mortals, was good enough to begin with. And yet the cruel author has not half done with her. Now, when she has so much need of physical strength to sustain her under her mental sufferings, he puts her on a short allowance of food. Not but that he makes a pretence of setting abundance before her, or sends her faithful servants to do it: good food, too, such as you or I could eat at any time, but the nicer it is, the less she eats of it. He won't let her eat; he only sets it before her to tantalize her.

If all that authors relate of their heroines be true, and I suppose it is, they never eat as much solid food as would keep a chicken alive. They take some tea, however; but they only swallow it: they never drink it as people do when they are dry. Their emotional organs

are so continually wrought upon, that nearly everything chokes them.

I remember a story published a few years ago in one of the Weeklies, wherein the heroine suffered all manner of trials for more than five years, and during all that time I could not ascertain that she ate anything but "toast done to a turn." Sometimes she refused even that; but I never wondered much that she did—toast is good; but being the sole article on her bill of fare, I suppose she got tired of it. According to custom, the author made a show of offering various niceties for her acceptance; but she always sent them away untouched; he never meant she should eat them, and she knew it, and acted accordingly. It is quite probable that her faithful servant fared well about that time.

Semi-starvation is hard enough; but the measure of her physical sufferings is not yet full. With malignant ingenuity her tormentor now contrives ways to deprive his victim of necessary sleep. If the tea she has been permitted to take (for this very purpose, I have not doubt) does not prove sufficient, her many woes are sent to hold a midnight dance around her couch.

In ordinary cases, the endurance of months, perhaps years, of such persecutions would be considered sufficient apology for the loss of personal beauty. But this young woman is denied even the poor privilege of looking as bad as she feels. So under all her trials, knowing what is expected of her, the unoffending creature contrives to "look lovelier than ever." It is wonderful that she can do it—it seems impossible, nevertheless she does it.

I suppose there are some prosaic persons who will tell me that I am making a plea for mere non-entities—that these young ladies never had, and never will have any actual existence; but it is my opinion they are solemn realities. Still I do not think I should have spoken, if I had not perceived their condition to be every year growing worse. In former times, no matter how many tears were shed during the perusal of a novel of three volumes, the last chapter made amends for all. The old fashioned novels always "*came out well.*" Whatever trials the heroine had to bear, she had one thing at least to sustain her; she knew she might depend on a blissful marriage at last. This comforting assurance, no doubt, often kept the frail creature from fainting by the way.

But now the course of events is changed somewhat; the heroine never knows what to expect; she may marry, and she may not, and

this distressing uncertainty is, we may presume, as hard to bear as any of her other afflictions. From a careful observation of different cases, I have arrived at the conclusion that heroines, as a class, have degenerated physically. They do not, on an average, live so long as in former times. When you read a modern novel, it is best not to risk your peace of mind by becoming much attached to the heroine; the chances are about ten to one that she will never live to see the end of it. Does not this show a great want of calculation in the writer? Why manufacture such a delicate piece of china, and then shatter it. Why assume the responsibility of conducting so frail a vessel, when he knows it can never keep together long enough to reach its destined port? Does he suppose it can be any pleasure to us to look on, and see it go down?

Setting metaphor aside, does not justice demand that in the case of these interesting young ladies, some milder form of treatment should be adopted! Yes, *justice*, for are they not invariably free from all offence, actual or intentional? Do they not, under all circumstances, preserve their spotless innocence! "Not to put too fine a point upon it," do they deserve the treatment they receive?

But supposing they do, ought we, the readers, to be made to suffer by it? It has been observed that the Esquimaux, in the frozen wastes of British America, can not strike his dusky mate but the whole world feels the blow; probably by a process similar to that the same individual employs in the management of his dog-team. He strikes the one next the sledge, who instantly takes the hint and bites his nearest neighbor, who bites the next, and so on till each one gets his share of "coercion."

Now the pernicious influence of the constant exhibition of literary cruelty must be wide spread and deep. Its hardening effect upon the already hard-hearted author is very apparent; he is never so well pleased as when he sees he can make you weep. Upon the reader the effect is always more or less painful—this rehearsal of sorrows we have no power to relieve. Why should we any longer disquiet ourselves in vain? Why be so prodigal of tears, whose saltness can avail nothing whatever? Would it not be better to strike at once to the root of the matter, by appealing to the *author* of all the trouble? He may not be entirely beyond our influence.

The spirit of the present age is opposed to cruelty, in all its forms. Its voice is everywhere heard pleading for the defenceless. Let

us hope that even authors will hear it at last, that the gall and wormwood, upon which they mostly regale themselves, shall, at no distant day, be exchanged for the milk of human kindness. Will you tell me that we need sometimes to forget ourselves in the contemplation of other people's sorrows? Most certainly we do; but if the day of which I spoke should ever arrive, and we should find ourselves in danger of becoming torpid and unfeeling, for want of an object to call forth our sympathies, perhaps acquaintance with some destitute widow, or suffering child, or lonely old man, might supply the needed excitement. If we have a few surplus tears to shed, perhaps we might be moved thereto by the sight of misery in our own streets and lanes; and perhaps, who knows? perhaps your own kitchen servant may have some of the elements of the heroine in her rough composition.

---

### THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN.

THERE is much clamor in these days of progress respecting a grant of new rights, or an extension of privileges for our sex. A powerful moralist has said that "in contentions for power, both the philosophy and poetry of life are dropped and trodden down." Would not a still greater loss accrue to domestic happiness, and to the interests of well-balanced society, should the innate delicacy and prerogative of woman, as woman, be forfeited or sacrificed?

"I have given her as a helpmate," said the voice that cannot err, when it spoke unto Adam, in the cool of the day, amid the trees of Paradise. Not as a toy, a clog, a wrestler, a prize-fighter. No, a helpmate, such as was fitting for man to desire, and for woman to become.

Since the Creator has assigned different spheres of action, for the different sexes, it is to be presumed, from his unerring wisdom, that there is work enough in each department to employ them, and that the faithful performance of that work will be for the benefit of both. If he has made one the priestess of the inner temple, committing to her charge its unrevealed sanctities, why should she seek to mingle in the warfare that may thunder at its gates, or rock its torrents? Need she be again tempted by pride or curiosity, or glowing words, to barter her own Eden?

The true nobility of woman is to keep her own sphere, and to adorn it; not, like the

comet, daunting and perplexing other systems, but as the pure star, which is the first to light the day, and the last to leave it. If she shares not the fame of the ruler and the blood-shedder, her good works, such as "become those who profess godliness," though they leave no "foot-prints on the sands of time," may find record in the "Lamb's book of life."

---

### TRANSPLANTED.

BY W. DEXTER SMITH, JR.

WHERE the violets are nodding,  
Smiling in the gentle breeze,  
Where the zephyrs sing sweet carols  
As they dance among the trees—  
Where the little songsters warble  
From the dewy morn till night,  
There we laid our darling Minnie  
Evermore from mortal sight.

She was fairer than the sunbeams  
That our dally path illumine,  
And her voice was like sweet music  
In our home where now is gloom:  
Angels saw our child, and, watching—  
Beck'ning to our darling prize,  
Bore her to their home in heaven—  
To the land beyond the skies.

---

### EVENING.

BY CATHARINE MITCHELL.

DAY declines;  
The last bright tinges of the setting sun,  
That robed in splendor the gray, rifted clouds,  
And gilded the surrounding scenery  
With crimson drapery fringed with burnished gold,  
Have gently faded from the western skies;  
The soft reflections from the greenwood side,  
Seen in the bosom of the clear blue waters—  
They, too, have vanished like a morning dream.

The winds are hush'd;  
The shades of evening gather, dark'ning fast,  
And o'er the highland floats a shadowy cloud,  
Soaring away above the distant hills;  
The feathered songster seeks her downy nest  
In the dark pine that crowns its rocky height;  
On yon tall tree that bends above the river,  
Whose boughs seem shattered by the wintry storms,  
Sits the lone night-owl, looking o'er the brake,  
Where the mute partridge and his timid mate  
Stand ready to conceal their little heads  
Under the sedgy grass.

Time moves apace;  
A dusky curtain droops around the scene,  
Wrapping the forest tops in deepening gloom;  
No moon breaks forth, no twinkling stars appear  
To guide the weary traveller on his way,  
And all is settled into murky night,  
But soothing hope awaits the dawning light  
To gladden nature with her cheerful beams.