

We reached the hall, and with some little difficulty succeeded in getting a good seat: In a few minutes the fair (?) lecturer entered. She was very tall and angular, wore green goggles, had no crinoline, and, in general, looked more like a demoralised male ghost apparelled in female attire than like a woman. I might state that the audience was almost wholly of the gentler sex. Scrag commenced and hammered away at the male portion of the population for an hour. Her ideas I need not repeat: they were the usual gasconade employed on such occasions;—sneering allusions to the phrase “lord and master,” narrowing tales of brow beaten wives said to be slaves to brutal husbands—in short the whole affair summed up represented women as angels and men as devils. It was so ridiculous that I would have laughed heartily, had I not noticed the deep effect Penelope’s words were making on my wife. She was silent all the way home, engaged in deep thought: silent at the breakfast table: silent at dinner, and made no reply to my nervous railery. I went down from dinner sad and dispirited, a heavy presentiment was on my soul—why, I hardly knew. When I came home to tea no one waited for me in the hall—“why,” thought I, “can Abbey be sick?” I hurried in, but, alas! she was not alone—another was with her, from whom she was eagerly drinking in what I suppose seemed to her “gems of wisdom.” Who was that other? It was she who afterwards developed into my “white terror,”—twas Scraggyskin! From that moment my wife assumed a new aspect—informed me that she was my equal: she knew her rights and intended to act up to them. I was to be allowed the honor of supporting her as my wife, as before; but she was no longer to be the hireling of brutal man; she was my equal by birth, and greatly my superior in intellect. She was in future to be manager, while I was to fulfil the duty of man, viz., earning money to keep up my family, in the first instance, and devoting the balance towards sending out lecturers to free other women, millions of whom I was told were living in a state of willing bondage, because no light had been shed on their darkness. It is not to be supposed that I yielded to any such proposals, boldly and frankly as they were made. I stood with my two feet planted on my dignity, gracefully informed her that woman was the “weaker vessel,”—that although it would afford me great pleasure to labor for her sustenance, I did not really perceive that the path of duty lay in the way of sending out female lecturers. Nor did I yield on the willing bondage question, though slowly driven by the aggressions of the enemy from my first stand point. I could probably have withstood my wife; but, alas! I was no match for Scraggyskin. When she extended her right arm, and, pointing her finger at me in withering scorn, commenced her lecturing tirade of epithets, I invariably turned and ignominiously fled.—When I say that I was no match for Scraggyskin, you may imagine I saw her frequently.

I should rather think I did see her much too often. One month after that lecture my wife invited her to come and visit her:—she came and has remained, excepting at short intervals, till this date. She has assumed complete dominion of my establishment; she is supreme. My wife pays her willing obedience, unfortunately for my peace of mind I do not. I am ready to break my fetters at the first moment. I am like the Polish serfs: I am in forced bondage, but I all the while watch the horizon of passing events for relief from my thralldom. I feel certain that if Scrag, as I playfully term her, (mentally) were away, or pointed out in some delinquency, it would undeceive my wife, consequently Scrag’s outgoings and incomings are objects of especial moment to me; for, somehow or other, I cannot rid my mind of the idea that she is not what she seems—that she is an imposter; but to prove her in it is what the negro melodists term the “pull back.”—Alas! my surveillance has as yet amounted to nothing. Her visits are only to other wives than mine who are converts to her doctrine. I never could trace her to any low haunts. She does not imbibe intoxicating beverages, although from variations in her demeanour I sometimes strongly suspect her of intemperance. If I could only gain admittance to her private apartment, but she always keeps that locked. Never mind, I will follow her as a blood-hound, and woe to her when I run her to the ground! I am getting to be a regular savage, so intense is my desire for vengeance; I am blood-thirsty! I think I must file my teeth into the saw design, *a-la* the Australian savages, put an ornamental block through my nose and tattoo my face. I wonder if I would not be convicted of “Justifiable Homicide,” by a jury of my countrymen, if I were to get up a fit of temporary insanity, eat opium and run amuck, taking precious good care to injure no one but Scraggyskin;—if I only get twelve of the enslaved husbands to act on that jury I think I could safely try it. Would it not be a good plan to nail up her door and set the house on fire? I have a great mind to advertise in the papers, offering \$1000 reward to the heroic individual who will rid me of her! I wish it was a crime, punishable with penal servitude for life, to advocate “woman’s rights!” Here’s a public offer to politicians:—I will vote perpetually and consecutively for any aspirant, who will enter parliament with the fixed determination to exterminate female lectures, or die in the attempt. Really, the thing is coming to a crisis!—I cannot stand it any longer; I will put on a monk’s attire—shave my crown—embroider the red cross on my breast, and, like a second Peter the Hermit, start on a crusade in favor of down-trodden man. I am very sorry to see a desire for inviolable secrecy on the true state of the domestic affairs of the interior exhibited by my “companions in distress.”—This is radically wrong: it should not be. We must agitate the question and bring it prominently before the eyes of the general public;—