

## THE BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "A CORN OF WHEAT."\*

This is a two years' record of a primitive woman, whose home was in a prosaic country parsonage. Of the charm of its telling we have nothing but praise; and of its unusual heroine, we can only hope that her type is rare. With all its delightful description and character drawing, it is not a pleasant book to read, though its fascination is indisputable.

Judith's sister-in-law, the bustling, commonplace, little vicarress, with whom she lived, says to her husband:

"I'm afraid I haven't the Christian spirit, Charles, but Judith riles me; if she only would behave like other people."

Bessie's chief source of complaint against her was her fierce love of the open-air, which she indulged in to the extent of sleeping out of doors in a tent; and it was on her wanderings, clad in a dressing-gown, with her hair down, that she first meets the man who was her downfall, though she, herself, called it by another name.

She refuses the reparation that he is eager to offer her; and the love or desire that she felt for him turns to loathing—not, be it understood, from shame or anger, but simply that he had fulfilled all the need that she had of him. For she glories in the thought of the child she is to bear.

"My dear, my dear!" He knelt down beside her, and took her hands. "You and I have suffered a great deal for each other; let us suffer a little more for that poor child."

"Don't call her that," she whispered, angrily; "she isn't poor, she's *mine*."

"And mine."

"No!" She raised her clenched fist, and seemed about to strike him. "O! I could kill you," she said, softly, "when you say that. . . I'm rather a stupid woman, but I feel sure about this; it would spoil my life, and it would spoil yours."

When she asks him, "Have we been very wicked, Roger?" he makes the extraordinary reply that he doesn't think so. "It was different for me, and well, you see, I had been in love before; but to you it was all new, and, well, you come of a race of clergymen."

Judith takes advantage of the absence of her brother and his wife, to leave the quiet parsonage, that had been her home for many years; and in a letter tells them that it is for reasons they would rather not hear, but of which she is not ashamed.

Alone, in an isolated country village, she becomes a prey to morbid fears and fancies, which threaten her with madness.

"The past months had taught her that as yet the world has no place for those who have sinned in its eyes; and the child of sin would suffer too. She clapped her hands violently together. No; she had not really sinned; she would never admit

that, for she had left Roger, when her love had turned to loathing. Poor little thing! oh! poor little thing! what could she do to make amends."

The most inexplicable part of the story is that, shortly before the child's birth, she falls under the religious influence of an impossible Baptist minister in the drapery business, and marries him.

"When I think you are coming," she said, "I am not so much afraid."

"But I can't stay 'ere for ever."

"Oh!" Judith drew in her breath. "No; you can't; what shall I do?"

The man's eyes glistened, his mouth twitched.

"Let me take you home with me," he said. "I'll take care of you, and it will be better for the child."

"Will it? are you sure?" she cried; and hope lit up her weary eyes. "I don't care where I go. Oh! I am tired, tired, tired; take me where I can be at peace."

Of this unfortunate man's experience and her subsequent desertion of him we have no space to write. Judith was, no doubt, unmoral, rather than immoral. Though this volume should not find its way into the hands of the *jeune fille*, nurses, who have the critical faculty, will find in it the interesting psychological study of an abnormal personality. And what study can be more absorbing than the complexities of human nature? But it should be read by the discerning only.

H. H.

## "DR. TUPPY."

Next week, in our Autumn Special Number, we intend to review "Dr. Tuppy," by Mr. Stephen Townesend. It would appear that his new work will rival in popularity that remarkable book, "A Thoroughbred Mongrel." We learn that the first colonial edition of "Dr. Tuppy," consisting of 5,000 copies, was immediately sold out.

## COMING EVENTS.

October 16th, 23rd; November 6th and 13th.—Nurses' Missionary League. The Autumn programme. Lectures on Hinduism and Islam, University Hall, W.C., by Canon Weitbrecht.

October 11th.—Meeting Executive Committee Society for State Registration of Nurses. 431, Oxford Street. 4.30 p.m.

October 15th.—Catholic Nurses' Association (Ireland), Annual Meeting. Lourdes House, Dublin.

October 22nd.—Central Midwives Board Examination, London, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

October 31st.—The Territorial Force Nursing Service (City and County of London) Reception at the Mansion House by the Lady Mayoress. 8 to 10.30 p.m.

November 2nd.—Quarterly Meeting of the Matrons' Council. Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Wigan.

\* E. H. Young. (Heinemann: London.)

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