A Modern Minerva.

She was deep in ev'ry science 'neath the sun,
(O, indeed 'twas fun)—
Cosmogony, Geogny,
Philology, Geology,
Geometry, Photometry—
But 'twas the saddest story to confess,
She could not sew a button on a dress!

She would spend a day or two upon a rhyme,
(What a high old time!)
Threnodes, Epodes,
Poems, Proems,
Lyrics, Pyrrhics—
But ev'ry time she went a thing to buy,
She surely would be cheated on the sly!

Ev'ry language ever written she would try,
(She could speak, oh my!)
Illyrian, Iberian,
Hebraic, Chaldaic,
Indian, African—
But when, ye gods, her cooking I recall,
I'm bound to state she could not cook at all!

And I? Oh, I don't count for much, you see,
(Do not, pray, mind me)—
Wandering, pondering,
Shaking, quaking,
Toiling, moiling—
I have to stick to her through thick and thin,
I've married her—that's where the joke comes in.

ESTELLE'S INFATUATION:

A NOVEL.

"This time I have taken two steps forward and fallen back one. The next time I shall make three and fall back none,' thought Lady Elizabeth, she too breathing more freely because of the hope she had that she could win poor Estelle's forgiveness when the day of her ordeal should come.

After this first and only brush that had ever been between the two, Anthony and Lady Elizabeth were yet oftener together and still more and more to each other than before. The old days at Kingshouse seemed to have been translated into these new conditions at Thorbergh; but had there been the smallest approach to flirting or levity on either side, Mrs. Smythe Smith would have taken the alarm, and there would probably have been a little scene of remonstrance or a false excuse for departure. But there was nothing to agitate the most sensitive prudery. Lady Elizabeth was grateful to her hostess for her trust. Knowing what she did, and having that ulterior object ever before her eyes, she held by her friendship with Anthony as the last hope of salvation poor Estelle was likely to have.

It was a heavy burden, however, to know what she did and keep it back from the one most interested. If she could but bring him to a milder frame of mind she would tell him. He ought to divorce his poor erring wife, to set her free to marry Charlie. If only she could influence him to this better and more magnanimous course! Meanwhile she made herself almost necessary to his existence; and the power was waxing secretly and unknown to himself, as the roots of the flowers swelled beneath the sod, and the sap in the trees rose ever higher. And as a further clamp and rivet, Estelle's little two-year-old boy had "taken to" Lady Elizabeth, and when he saw her would smile to her and hold out his little hands, and make much of her when she took him in her arms.

"You see we all love you, Lady Elizabeth," said Anthony one day, in his half-bitter and half-serious way. "My boy, my dog, and even I, who, in your eyes, am not so good as either."

CHAPTER V.

IN DIRE DISTRESS.

Meanwhile Estelle's cup of misery was full—so full that surely there was no room for more! In the earthquake she and Charlie had lost all they possessed, save the clothes in which they escaped and such loose silver as chanced to be in their pockets. Alone, and cut off from their past, disgraced where they were, penniless, was there a lower deep?

As their only chance, they wrote to Mary, whom now they knew to have been the anonymous sender of those sporadic supplies; whose other secret also they knew. Estelle was thus doubly bound to this coarse, vulgar car of cheatery and deception; for they knew her guilt and she knew theirs, and neither dared to betray the other. But Mary and her mother had the whip hand, and knew it.

But when Estelle wrote to them, giving an account of the earthquake and their losses, and asking for help, mother and daughter consulted together in adverse mood enough, and pronounced it a shame for grand folk like those to come upon poor people like them.

"Do they think we are made of money?" asked Mrs. Latimer, shrewishly.

"If they do, they'll have to find out their mistake," said Mary, grimly.

So much of grace, however, had they as to remit Charlie Osborne a very small pittance, just to meet the most pressing wants of the moment—sending therewith a curt and disagreeable letter full of covert insolence, saying that it was impossible for them to satisfy these constant and exorbitant demands—and that really Mrs. Harford must apply to her own people, who were better able to keep her than they. Poor folk like them had enough to do to keep their own heads over water.

Perhaps no trial had been greater to these two desolate creatures than was this letter, with its meagre remittance so reluctantly sent, its insolence so slightly veiled. It was a terrible moment. Even that when Anne had marked them with the brand of shame was less terrible than this; for this included the same confession of shame, and more besides.

Then Estelle made up her mind. It was a trial, but it was not a hazard. She knew the man, and felt sure that she could trust him. He was good and unselfish, and he had once loved her. Now that he was rich he would help her; even though helping her meant helping the man who had stood between them.

Her cheeks burned as with fire; her hands were cold as marble; her heart throbbed with hope and fear and the shame of downcast pride all in one; but it had to be done. Caleb Stagg was her last chance, failing a direct appeal to Anthony—or one yet more direct, to death and God! But the loving cling to life, however miserable they may be, if they can but live together. The dust of dead joys is better than the peace of eternal sleep, if only they can hold each other's hand and forget their wretchedness in a kiss. When things are at their extreme it is time enough voluntarily to die. While they love they are never at this extreme; and Estelle, who knew that her beloved was now dying, would not have hastened that invitable hour, no, not by one moment of coveted time. Wherefore she took her courage in both hands—wrote the story of her distress and denudation to Caleb Stagg, and spoke quite naturally of "Mr. Osborne" and of his state of health, and of her having joined him to look after him. She had, however, to add the slight change of name, and how they were known here at their hotel as "Mr. and Mrs. Charles," which gave a somewhat different complexion to the pure philanthropy of looking after her old friend and playmate, fallen into such a condition of health as demanded a competent nurse.

The first answer came by telegram. By return of post a substantial remittance was the second; and Estelle had not miscalculated. This sandy-haired, snub-nosed, ungainly omad'haun was truly the bit of human gold she had believed him to be; the hump between the hunchback's shoulders was, then, the sheath wherein were folded the angel's wings; and Love, pure, unselfish Love, once more vindicated its right to be held as the god of the world and the great centre of all life that is worth living.

The day was warm and bright, and the place was at its loveliest. Sea and sky were of the same deep blue, and both were as tranquil as twin children sleeping face to face. It was a day which moved the world to love and laughter—wherein the thrill of life was as strong as the sunshine and as passionate as the nightingale's song—as sweet as the scent of roses and orange flowers—as divine as the kindly gods who rule the destinies of the fortunate and happy. It seemed impossible to be even ill at ease on such a day. And yet what grief was in that chamber looking to the sea and across to the far distant land—what dread in the present! what terror of the future!

The supreme moment had come at last, and poor, weak, handsome Charlie Osborne was at the end of all his failures and at the outset of his great journey. He had lived to his last moment, and he had now to resign himself to the inevitable parting from the woman whose life his love had ruined and whom his death would leave desolate and destroyed. He half hoped, indeed, that she would not consent to live after him—that she would die either by force of nature or by the act of her own free-will. He scarcely thought she could live, and he hidden away from her in the narrow grave. It seemed sacrilegious—almost criminal. For all the wise tenderness and larger outlook which death brings to the dying, poor Charlie could not rise quite above that egotism which had been the ruling passion of his life. And yet he was not a bad fellow, taken any way. He was weak to his own desires, self-indulgent to his own fancies, and he had that fatal artistic temperament which cannot live or do good work under the strain of self-control. He must be cradled like a child in the arms of love, and fed like fabled fairies on the most gracious food of heaven. And what was good for him as an artist was good for him all through. His egotism was so far tempered and excused; but it had wrought infinite mischief, take it how one would.

He was lying now quite still, breathing with extreme difficulty, his eyes for the most part shut; but every now and then he opened them on Estelle sitting motionless and silent by his bedside. It was painful to him to speak. He had neither breath nor strength for articulation.

Suddenly the life that was ebbing slowly away flowed back with transient strength, and the fire that was dying down blazed up anew with power and brightness.

"You must write to Lady Elizabeth,' he said to Estelle. "If you can, reconcile yourself with your husband and get him to make you an allowance."

It was like some one else speaking, and Estelle quivered with a superstitious kind of dread. It was so unlike Charlie to think of means and measures—to plan or to foresee! What strange revelations and stranger metamorphoses were bound up with this dread passage? Was the soul transformed before the body ceased to hold it?

"I will, if you wish it, Charlie," she answered.

"Lady Elizabeth will be your friend," he continued. "Now that I am going, you want some one to befriend you."

"I will obey you, darling," she said, softly.

A little smile broke over his wasted features.

"Always the same," he said. "The sweetest and the best on earth!"

She kissed his hand lying in hers, and then he closed his eyes and spoke no more. His breathing grew fainter and fainter—more interrupted, more labored. There was a curious look of general collapse about the whole pose of the body, and the hand in hers was limp and lifeless. Through the partially unclosed lids she saw that the eyes were turned, and over the face and brow broke out the clammy sweats of death. The open lips were as full of pain as the lips of the Medusa in her agony; and then came that hoarse rattle in the throat which told of the supreme moment. Estelle rose to her feet and bent over the body of her dying lover. She neither rang nor called for the help or the companionship of her kind. Alone, as she had lived with him, so would she be when he died, and no stranger should desecrate the solitude of their love.

With straining eyes and a heart that throbbed as if it would burst within her bosom, she stood there watching till the last faint breath was drawn, and the life she had loved better than her own had sobbed itself away into nothingness and death. She knew when it came, and bent over with parted lips laid close to his to receive that last breath. She gathered it like a caress. It was like his very soul entering forever into her body—his last touch, his last word!—then darkness and a vague sense of falling came over her. She heard nothing; she knew nothing. That knock at the door—that hurried tread of a man's entering feet—that voice—all were lost to her, while a strong arm caught her as she fell, and a voice whispered softly: "Ah, my queenly lass, but thou'st come to a bad pass! God help thee, as I will!"

CHAPTER VI.

HER COMFORTER.

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." Sometimes; not always. The tempering to Estelle, for instance, was of the slightest quality, so far as she herself was concerned—that essential She which felt and suffered. Being, however, dead to all but her own suffering, she scarce recognized the benefits showered on her by Caleb Stagg, but took them as we take the flowers of the gorse on the common when we are wandering, foot-sore, faint and weary, our way lost, our direction unknown, the darkness of the night settling down.

Yet Caleb was of use to Estelle—of as much use and of a like kind as the nails and joints which hold the coffin planks together. He took all the trouble off her hands and let her indulge her grief unchecked. This was the best thing he could do for her; and she had a vague perception of its value. He was no more obtrusive than an intelligent machine; and Estelle, with the unconscious selfishness of grief, treated him with little more thought than if he had been a machine. Do we feel grateful to the nails and joints of the coffin planks, without which, however, our dear dead would be in sorry plight enough? They hold the coffin together, and keep the beloved safe from marauding beasts and birds of prey. But do we love them for that? Could she then love the man who arranged the details for Charlie's funeral, and so separated her from him forever?

The fatal day had come and gone, and Estelle was now alone in the world, so far as her own consciousness of companionship went. She had almost forgotten her child; her husband had ceased to exist; her father and mother were as dead worlds, and her whole past life at Kingshouse was a void. She had but one thought—one sentiment—her lost Love, and the bleak blackness of life without him. The spasm of something that was almost shame, which Anne's scorn had awakened, had gone into nothingness. Had she been asked, she would have planted her pride on her union with Charlie, and her shame would have gone to her marriage with Anthony. The one which the world disdained and the law condemned was pure; the other, which men called a sacrament, was impure. So she thought and felt, and Caleb was not the man to try to convince her of wrong reasoning.

But her state alarmed him. This blank and motionless despair was as a sickness he was unable to understand or cure. Had she wept or bewailed herself, had she been irritable in her grief and peevish in her sorrow, he would have known his way better; but to be so still and silent and patient and lifeless was something beyond his ken, and he was frightened in proportion to his ignorance. She had fallen into the same state as that which had come on her after she had married Anthony, save that she had not that point of horror and personal shrinking which had then been her active cross; and which she had put all her energy into concealing from the man whom she never felt to be aught but her purchaser and tyrant. To Caleb she was as indifferent as if he had been a trained dog walking on its hind legs, but as gentle as she was indifferent. Sometimes she would stop the carriage and ask Caleb to get her such and such a flower that she saw by the way-side.

"Charlie will like that," she would say; and when the flower was laid on his grave she seemed to feel a certain pleasure, and over her poor pale face would steal a faint sad smile, as if answering back one from him there in the dark grave beneath her feet.

Once she startled Caleb by saying, with unconscious parody of a more famous reduplication: "I think no woman's lover but mine died twice. Once before I married him, and once after."

"It has been a sore trial for you," said Caleb, not knowing what else to say, and, by the way, not knowing what to call her.

This, in its degree, was a trial to him, accustomed as he was, like all people of his condition, to bring in the name of the person to whom he was speaking at every turn. It seemed to him so bald and uncivil not to give Estelle some kind of distinctive name. He could scarcely "bring his tongue" to call her Mrs. Charles, and he would not wound her by calling her Mrs. Harford. When he did stumble over a designation at all, it was the former, for he would rather wound his own conscience than her feelings.

"Yes," said Estelle, "God has been very hard to me—very cruel. I wonder why?"

"Those whom He loveth He chasteneth," said Caleb, in a low voice. "Because He loves you, Mrs. Charles."

"And therefore killed my darling twice. I do not call that love," she answered, and sank again into silence, from which Caleb did not dare to try and rouse her.

It was natural that the whole story should have excited a great interest in the English colony, both rooted and nomadic, which found itself on the shores of this enchanting sea. Its mixture of pathos and criminality gave a pleasant savor to gossip; and pity, touched with condemnation, made a more interesting state of mind than one sentiment alone could have produced. To this was now added curiosity. Who was this man who had come to take possession of this sorely wounded Impropriety? He was not her husband, evidently not a relation, and as evidently not a servant. He was too respectful for the one, too familiar for the other; also he was not up to her height socially; yet he had the command of money to a fabulous extent. The young English clergyman and his wife, who might have solved the mystery, had left the place; and conjecture exhausted itself in vain. She more beautiful and more desolate than Ariadne herself, and he the queerest looking god that ever leaped from a car, steam-driven or panther-drawn, what chain could bind them together? It was not love, and it was not blood; and the world is not quick to recognize the unselfish heroism of devotion.

If nothing was known here, all was patent at Kingshouse, and the bad, black news flew about the place as fast as if carried on bats' wings in the twilight. It made the staple of conversation, and was "the shame and the burning" of the hour. Not content with having left her own lawful husband for one man, this exceedingly improper person, this Mrs. Harford, had inveigled another. And such another! The golden calf, the butt of his county, was her latest sacrifice; and he, the fool that he was, did not see how she was making use of him, and how she was treating him as a mere footstool or hearth-rug! It was really too shameful, look at it as one would! She was past praying for, of course. She was lost for time and eternity, saving a miracle of grace to snatch her from those eternal fires she so richly deserved. But he, though he was a born idiot, all but qualified for Earlswood, he was too good and simple minded to be made the victim of an artful *intrigante* who destroyed men's lives as cruelly as if they had been sacrifices offered up to Moloch.

Kingshouse waxed fierce in its virtue at this time. No Jew ever scraped his floors and walls with more zeal at Passover to make sure that no forbidden scrap of leaven lurked therein than did the whole society of Estelle's old home repudiate her and her misdeeds. No one dared to sympathize with her sorrow for fear of seeming to condone her sin, and the general verdict was: "She deserves all she got;" and "She brought it all on herself, the hussy!"

Mrs. Clanricarde had to bear more taunts and sneers and cold shoulders and tossed-up heads than her pride well knew how to endure; and that foolish George was crestfallen to a degree he had never been, even when he had most severely burned his fingers in the fire of the House.

And when that foolish George wept, and said that nature was stronger even than morality, his wife metaphorically bit off his head, and told him he was an atheist, and she would hear no more of his blasphemy. She even went so far as to say: "That miserable girl or me, George. If you go to her, you leave me forever. Besides, where, if you please, is the money to go with? *You* have taken care that we shall never have a five pound-note to spare from our creditors. How are you to go? Let that hideous young man bear the burden. He has plenty of money. And when Mr. Harford divorces her he will marry her; and so she will not have to starve which is as much as she can expect and more than she deserves."

To such a pass of hardness—like to the nether millstone—had large social ambition, personal pride, and perpetual poverty brought the mother's heart, which under more favorable conditions would have been soft and loving enough.

Of Mrs. Aspline, too, it must be sorrowfully said that, on this matter of Estelle's disgrace, she disclosed the one black spot in her otherwise rose-red heart. She was for the most part a kind old thing—a generous-natured old Cookey; but this was one pull that wrenched her good-nature asunder, and let the little stream of gall trickle forth. The contrast to be made between snow-white Anne, under the hallowing influence o the matrimonial sacrament, and this besmirched Estelle, niether wife nor widow, was too strong to be resisted. She must show Mrs. Clanricarde her disdain. And she did.

Things at Mentone continued pretty much as they had been ever since poor Charlie's death. Estelle's intellect seemed benumbed, and showed no signs of rewakening.

One day she and Caleb were sitting by the grave, where she used to pass some time of every day. She used to say she was "going to Charlie," when she made her friend understand she wanted to go to the cemetery, and imagination supplied something almost like reality. Charlie was always alive to her.

Suddenly she looked up into Caleb's face.

"I suppose the world thinks I did wrong? Anne Aspline said so," she said, asking a question by the inflection of her voice.

"I suppose so," said honest Caleb, uncomfortably. How he wished that he could have repudiated the idea, and have shouted, "No!" to all the four quarters of heaven! But even though it was Estelle who had done it, for a married woman to leave her husband and live with another man was a long way beyond the limits of the morally permissible.

"And did you—do you?" she asked again.

He writhed in spirit. Abstractedly, yes. The act had been profoundly immoral; but his was not the hand to hurt that already so cruelly wounded dove. And what mattered it what he thought? Who was he, to lay down a law or presume to find fault with such as she?

"I would never blame aught you did, Mrs. Charles. You know what you do, I reckon," he answered, humbly.

"But you think I did wrong all the same," she persisted, with the obstinacy of a sick mind.

"It would have been an ill thing in any one else," he returned.

"I don't see the difference," she said. "I am no better than another. He was; but I am not."

"Why do you talk of it?" said Caleb. "Please don't, Mrs. Charles. You did what you'd a mind to do, and so let it bide."

"I did what I ought to have done," said Estelle, with a curious emphasis. "They had all deceived me—all made me commit that first sin. This was no sin, the other was. This was only putting things straight again."

"That should comfort you to think of," said Caleb, his eyes cast down.

"But now I have one wish—only one," she continued. "I want Mr. Harford to divorce me. Then I will be married to Charlie by the Church before I die."

"Good Lord!" cried Caleb, aghast. "Mrs. Harford—Mrs. Charles—oh, my dear lady, what ever is it you are saying! Do think a bit! How can you be married to him and him a-lying here?"

"Oh yes, they will. I am sure I can," was her reply. "He is not dead, you know. Only his body is dead, but his soul is alive, and I can be married to that—my soul to his before I die—and then we shall be all right when we meet in heaven."

"Lord sakes!" said Caleb. "Did ever any one hear the like?"

"If you had as much faith as you ought to have you would understand me," answered Estelle; "and," again looking him full in the face, "you would sympathize with me and uphold me."

"I will uphold you, Mrs. Charles, in all and aught you wish to do," said Caleb, with passionate solemnity. "But this is such an idea! I don't well see how it can be. I doubt if ever a clergyman would be got to do it."

"We will see," said Estelle. "And I intend to write Mr. Harford and ask him. He will not refuse. He knows that I am not his wife now, and never was. I was only his married slave. My mother sold me and he bought me; and I owe him no more than any other slave owes her master." And not so much, indeed!"

"If you get him to divorce you, it will be another big talk," said Caleb. "Folks have talked enough at present; I'd be main sorry to give them more to set their teeth on!"

"Would you like me to go back to Mr. Harford?" she asked, a little haughtily.

"Nay that would I not," he answered, with his heart in his good, honest, homely face. "What I would like best of all is that you should have some lady friend, like Lady Elizabeth, to come and bear you company, Mrs. Charles; and that you'd just let me go on as I am, looking after you and seeing that you want for naught. But I want no more clatter and no more worry to you. And if I were you I'd leave Mr. Harford alone until we see how things turn of themselves."

"It is not fair," she answered. "I owe it to my darling's memory to get rid of this hated name, which I suppose is legally mine. Do you know, Mr. Stagg, I had almost forgotten it. For all these months that I have been with Charlie I never remembered that I was not legally his wife till that dreadful girl reminded me. And then I forgot it again when he went from me. It is only quite lately that I have thought of it, and that I want so much to get rid of Mr. Harford, and to be his, my darling's wholly and entirely."

"It is a sweet thought, and like yourself, Mrs. Charles," said poor Caleb, in terrible perplexity how to meet this thought which was so insane, though the mind in which it was born was saner in this than in some other things. "But I think it wants considering. And if you'll be guided be me, you'll wait until you are a little stronger before you put yourself about again. Will you let me write to Lady Elizabeth? That would be the wisest thing to do. If she could come here for a bit, that would be about the best job we could get through."

"Yes," said Estelle. "Write to her. She was always good to him, and *he* liked her. *He* would be pleased for me to have her here. Yes, do write. Let us go home," she added, feverishly. "Let us go home at once, and do you write at once."

"I'll go for the trap," said Caleb, bending to her mood as the shadow follows the substance. "We shall be in time for the post, I dare say, and she'll have the letter the day after to-morrow."

"Dear, dear Lady Elizabeth!" cried Estelle, to whom this new thought had give a new impulse. "Oh, if she was but here! *She* would help me! *she* would comfort me!"

(To be Continued).

How to Drink Tea.

As commonly prepared, tea is so bitter and disagreeable that the addition of milk becomes almost necessary to make it palatable. But to put milk or cream into properly prepared tea is to commit an unpardonable gastronomic solecism, not only for the fanciful reasons that a chemical compound results from the mixture resembling the basis of leather, but that the basis of milk disguises the peculiar aroma of tea, and makes one kind taste almost exactly like another, very much in the same way as French cooks sometimes spoil the natural flavor of fish with their eternal sauces, till you are unable to tell whether you are eating salmon or shark, catfish or dogfish. Sugar, on the other hand, may and should be added to tea. For it makes the taste of the tea more agreeable without in the least interfering with its fragrance. Milk and tea soon become very insipid to the sense of those who have accustomed themselves to drink plain tea. Moreover there is a special enjoyment to be derived from each kind of tea; and how actually the sense of smell can be educated in the art of discriminating teas is shown in the case of professional tea tasters, who can distinguish not only the country and the locality where the leaves were grown, but the year and season, and even the ship that brought them across the ocean.—*Contemporary Review.*

THE LATE DR. J. G. HOLLAND, the eminent writer and physician, wrote and published in Scribner's Magazine: "It is a fact that many of the best proprietary medicines of the day are more successful than many physicians, and most of them are first discovered and used in actual medical practice. When, however, any shrewd person knowing their virtue, foreseeing their popularity, secures and advertises them, then, in the opinion of the bigoted, all virtue went out of them." The late Dr. Dio Lewis, in speaking of Warner's Safe Cure, says: "if I found myself the victim of a serious kidney trouble, I would use your preparation." Dr. R. A. Gunn, M. D., author of "Gunn's New Improved Handbook of Hygiene and Domestic Medicine," says: "I am willing to acknowledge and commend thus frankly the value of Warner's Safe Cure." The celebrated Dr. Thompson, of the University of the city of New York, says: "More adults are carried off by chronic kidney disease than by any other malady except consumption."

First Lady of the Land.

"Is it proper to speak of Mrs. Harrison as the first lady of the land?" That depends. If our correspondent has a wife, she should be the first lady of the land to him. If he has no wife, his mother should be the first lady, and if he has no mother either, then his oldest sister. If he is an unmarried orphan, without sisters, he may be right in looking to the wife of the President as the first lady of the land, but any day he may meet some other lady who will change his opinion and her name.—*Hartford Courant.*

Six Tall Britishers.

At the presentation of Sir Julian Pauncefote to the President on Friday, the Blue Parlor of the White House sheltered some very striking-looking men. Pauncefote is 6 feet 6 inches in height, his Secretaries of Legation, Edwards and Herbert, are more than 6 feet each, and the other Englishmen present were almost as tall. Walker Blaine estimated that the aggregate height of the six Britishers was 37 feet.—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

To Waterproof Hammocks.

Hammocks that are allowed to hang out most of the time are soon rotted by the action of the weather. It is said that they may be made "waterproof" by immersing in boiling linseed oil, and leaving them in it for a day or two. Then with a cloth rub off all the oil possible, and when the netting is dried it will last much longer than it otherwise would.

A correspondent of *Nature* reports having captured a mosquito in Belfast, Ireland on March 29th.