

WOMAN'S HIGHER SPHERE.

ALPHONSO DE BROWN was busily engaged waxing the ends of his moustache with mucilage, when the servant brought him a letter. On looking at the handwriting he recognized the well-known blots that obliterated half his name, and his moustachios curled with joy in spite of the gum. The highly scented epistle read as follows:—

“My esteemed Mr. de Brown—You may call on me to-morrow, when Pa will be out all the afternoon. If my hopes are realized all may be well yet. Your old admirer,
ARAMINTA.”

A. de Brown did not sleep that night; but sat up smoking all the old cigar stubs he could find in the deserted fire-place, wrapped in a blanket and a lover's thoughts. The next day he called and was admitted to the drawing-room—no one was there to receive him, and during the two hours he waited for that unmistakable foot-step he could not help noticing in a rapid glance how entirely altered was the place. The warmth and color seemed to have gone out with the hall-stove, and all was cold and cheerless. In places where stood the easy chairs, ottomans, velvet footstools, fur-rugs, etc., were terrestrial and celestial globes, a telescope, a photographic set, a skeleton and a case of fossils. A dead cat, in the course of dissection, rested on a white marble table in the corner where had once stood a beautiful Wedgewood cabinet; and where the piano used to locate its dulcet strains, the chill silence of an Egyptian mummy rested in a slant against the dado.

Alphonso thought he had got into the wrong house and was about to escape from the strange museum, when the door opened and revealed the form of Araminta Van Goldstein. So long a time had elapsed since he had seen the object of his heart's affections that he scarcely recognized her in the short haired, gold eye-glass'd, severely dressed matter-of-fact girl, who gazed at him as though he were a newly arrived trilobite or pleiosaurus. He stepped forward, but was instantly checked by the repressive sneer that curled completely around the once smile-enwreathed nose of his only idol.

“You are here, then, Mr. de Brown, and evidently have no idea of why you are here,” said the girl, “but you will soon learn. I have determined to marry no one but a profound scholar and scientist, one who will be able, if not to guide and assist, at least to follow and pick up fragments in the noble path of intellectual culture wherein I now tread. If you wish to gain my hand and rest under the shadow of my father's residence, as you have evidently wished for these seven years since, it will be necessary for you to convince me at once of your scholastic fitness to be my companion through a life devoted to the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of truth. To be brief, therefore, will you tell me at once and as concisely as possible, whether you consider the paleolithic remains of Venezuela to be as old as those of the Belgian caves; if there is any hope of discovering the origin of the Romani in the buried cities of the Eastern plateau of Asia; whether the origin of celestial species as propounded by Norman Lockyer recently was in anyway fore-shadowed by the old nebular hypothesis, and to what extent we may expect the biological researches in connection with the spontaneous generation of animal life may—?”

A loud shriek was heard as Alphonso de Brown jumped from the open window into the conservatory below, bearing with him the undissected remains of the unfortunate cat, which vainly opposed his egress.



PROFESSOR CLARKE

MAKES HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE MUNICIPAL TIGHT-ROPE.