

"That is impossible. Grandmamma can't look at you as though she meant to devour you in one bite."

"If I had anywhere to take you," goes on George, "any home of my own, with some old aunt at the head of it, for instance. Lots of fellows have aunts who live with them," grudgingly. But I never saw the aunt that would live with me; and of course a bachelor's room wouldn't do, not if I paced the streets all night. Why on earth am I not married?" says Mr. Wilding, distractedly.

"Is this a time to talk nonsense?" asks Brenda, with sudden vehemence. "Of course, if you were married, I should not be here at all, and that would end the whole matter."

She is looking up at him from under the bewitching hood, with two angry eyes, that say far more than their owner is aware of. Her lips are quivering; two crimson spots enrich each rounded cheek; Wilding, gazing at her extreme beauty, loses his head.

"I am not sure of that," he says unsteadily. "I think if I were married, you, and you only, would be standing just there."

"George! George! have you forgotten?" entreates she, shrinking from him.

"I have forgotten nothing, not even Disney," returns he recklessly. "I know you don't care for that ghostly old corpse, laid out by Poole; how could you? And I love you, darling—darling. Forgive me, Brenda; I should not speak to you like this now, and here, but it has been on my heart for so long, and—I can't help it. But if you will give me even the faintest encouragement, you shall never marry Disney, I swear."

Perhaps he might have said even more, but Miss Molyneux has burst into tears, and has covered her face with her hands, and is sobbing quietly but bitterly.

"Don't do that, Brenda," exclaims he, passionately; "I can stand anything but that. Look here," desperately, "something must be done, you know; you can't stay here all night. Wait one moment."

Running down the steps he touches the devoted Fenmore's elbow and says something to him in a low tone. An earnest conversation follows. Then comes a faint sound as of silver falling upon silver, and then Wilding returns to his cousin's side.

"Come," he says, quietly taking her hand. "I have arranged for you. There is no help for it, Brenda; you must do as I tell you."

Brenda, still crying silently, suffers herself to be led to the carriage, and together they enter it again and drive away.

At luncheon next day, Brenda is singularly silent. Lady Molyneux has fortunately asked few questions about last night's proceedings, and Lord Disney—who is with them—disdains to seek information about anything in which Wilding has had a part. Theodore, Brenda's brother, is also present.

Grandmamma's indifference is all that can be desired; Disney's sudden silence equally happy; and, in fact, all is going merry as a marriage bell, until Theodore unconsciously, but fatally, lets fall a bombshell that blows the blessed calm to atoms.

"I say, Brenda, it was well you forgot your latch-key last night," says this misguiding youth with the utmost *bonhomie*. "I found it on the sideboard after you had left; and but for it could not have let myself in, as I have lost my own."

His sister turns very white. "Brenda's!—my latch-key, you mean," says grandmamma quickly. "But you dream, Theodore; Brenda had it with her at the opera; she herself could not have got in without it."

Brenda casts an anguished glance at Theodore, who is—and, what is worse, looks—distinctly puzzled.

"Explain, Brenda, you surely had it," says grandmamma in a voice that admits of no evasion. Disney, laying down his knife and fork, gazes with half-closed eyes at the embarrassed girl.

"Had what, grandmamma?" asks she faintly, to gain time.

"What? The latch-key. Are you deaf?" says grandmamma.

Brenda is silent. Lies are at any time abhorrent to her, and now to tell one will be useless, as her hesitation has been marked.

"Brenda, speak!" says grandmamma in an awful tone. "You had it with you?"

"Of course she had! What a fuss about nothing. It must have been my own I found," breaks in Theodore, lying valiantly, but vainly.

"I had not, grandmamma," said Brenda bravely, but in accents hardly intelligible.

"Then, pray, how did you come in last night?"

"I did not come in at all," replies Brenda in an agony. "Grandmamma, listen, let me explain—"

But grandmamma is quite past explanation. She has risen, and is standing with both her old withered hands pressed upon the table, as though to support her under this crowning horror, and is glaring at the terrified child with fierce dark eyes.

"Am I to understand," she says, "that you spent last night out of my house?"

"If you would let me speak," says Brenda, sobbing.

"Answer me, wretched girl. Were you with your sister?"

"No. She—"

"Not here, nor with your sister, but with

George Wilding, I presume. Ha! Not another word! I always knew what would come of your intimacy with that degraded young man."

"This is shocking—shocking," says Lord Disney in his slow, aggravating manner. "And, er—brilliantly—'shocking! Of course, Miss Molyneux, this—this young man—your cousin—having found more favour in your sight than I have been fortunate enough to find, I beg to resign my present position, and withdraw from an engagement that no doubt is irksome to you. You will pardon me, Lady Molyneux, if I say this is all very sad, very sad," with an elaborate bow.

"Sad—it is disgraceful. Go, girl, to your room, and stay there until I decide what shall be done with you. My roof shall no longer cover one so lost to all sense of—"

Theodore, rising abruptly, goes to his sister's side and passes his arm round her.

"Look here, grandmamma, stop all that," he says with a frown; "it might do at 'the dukes,' but it is out of place here, and I won't have Brenda abused."

Here some one, with a grateful smile, removes his arm from Brenda's waist and places his own there instead. It is George Wilding, who has entered unannounced; just a minute or two before a small, plain woman, who appears, and stands unnoticed in the doorway, with a pretty swansdown cloak and hood upon her arm, that contrasts oddly with her own meaner garments.

"Who is abusing Brenda?" demands George Wilding, looking quietly upon the assembled group, yet with a curious light in his eyes that marks him dangerous in his present mood. "Who is casting even the faintest slur upon her? He shall answer to me for it."

He stares coldly, and somewhat insolently at Lord Disney as he speaks, and that discreet nobleman, dropping his eyeglass, discovers a difficulty in finding it again.

"I've made some beastly mistake, you know. It is all my fault," says Theodore, with extreme contrition.

Here the plain little woman in the doorway, perceiving a lull in the conversation, comes timidly forward.

"Please, Miss Molyneux, I have brought you your opera-cloak," she says "as I feared you might be wanting it again to-night."

"Oh, thank you," says Wilding, turning to her promptly. "Perhaps, Mrs. Fenmore, as you are here, you will kindly tell Lady Molyneux of all your goodness to Miss Brenda last night. How you took her in and made her very comfortable in your own house, when—because of the stupidity of the arrangements in this house—she found herself out in the cold; and how you yourself brought her safely back here this morning."

"Oh! I'm sure my lady," says the coachman's wife, dropping a curtsy, "I'm only sorry I couldn't do more for Miss Molyneux. I count she was desperate uncomfortable, my lady; but I did my best."

"What is all this?" said grandmamma. "I fail to understand; and riddles are an abomination to me."

"When we found it impossible to ring up your servants, and I knew the latch-key had been forgotten, I took Brenda to Mrs. Fenmore's house, where, if not exactly a Belgian mansion, she was at least as safe as in the house of a duchess," with a kind bow to Mrs. Fenmore.

"Don't cry, Brenda; tears are too sacred to be wasted on such a miserable occasion as the present."

"Did Miss Molyneux sleep in your house last night?" asks Lady Molyneux, addressing the coachman's wife and insolently giving Wilding to understand she refuses to credit his story unsupported.

"Yes, my lady; she came to me a little after 12 o'clock, and proud I was, my lady, to be of the least service to her. I brought her back myself this morning, which I hope, Miss—"

respectfully to Brenda—"you didn't catch cold, and are none the worse for your strange bed; which Fenmore do say that change of sheets at any time is most dangerous."

"I am quite well, and I thank you very much, Mrs. Fenmore," said Brenda in a stifled tone. As her face is pressed against George's gray coat this is hardly cause for wonder.

"As for you, sir," says Wilding, turning to the discomfited lord, "having heard you with my own ears decline the honor of an alliance with this young lady, I beg to tell you it was just as well you did so; it saved trouble, as she had not the smallest intention of marrying you."

"Sir!" exclaims the aristocratic fossil, taking fire at this insult.

"No, sir, not the smallest," repeats Wilding contemptuously; "she has the good—I mean, of course, the bad—taste to prefer me, which, after all, when one comes to think of it, is only natural. What bond could there be between May and December?"

"Brenda," begins grandmamma, with much wrath.

"Go and put on your things, Brenda," interrupts George sternly. "I shall take you to your sister. Go, my love," in a fond whisper to the trembling girl, who at the word escapes gladly from the room. "You, madam, have behaved infamously towards her," goes on George, determined to carry things with a high hand. "And when you said she should never sleep another night beneath your roof you spoke the truth. Jose will receive her and she shall stay with her until I marry her. I will not

have her heart broken. If you wish to apologize to her for this morning's conduct, you can see her at Cromwell Road."

Having made this galling suggestion, he has the good sense to beat an instant retreat.

"I must say I think you deserve every bit of it," says Theodore to his stricken grandame. "You have acted toward Brenda for the last two years like a regular old Tartar, and here's the end of it."

"Leave the room, you wicked boy," commands grandmamma in a shrill tone; and Theodore for once obliges her, more, I think, because he wishes to go than from any high sense of duty.

"And I have always borne with that boy and humoured him in every respect," says Lady Molyneux, mopping her eyes indignantly. To say I deserve such treatment—I!"

"I can't deny saying I agree with Theodore," says Lord Disney solemnly, with aggravating slowness.

"Eh!" says grandmamma instantly putting down the handkerchief and turning to face the enemy with renewed vigor, as she scents hostility in a fresh and unexpected quarter.

"Yes, yes! You have acted abominably," goes on Disney, who is evidently not afraid of an old woman. "You have accused that charming young lady, your granddaughter, of an indiscretion she would scorn to commit. You have jumped at conclusions, and its—its—its execrable form, madam, to jump at conclusions."

"Form!" says grandmamma witheringly. "What is it you mean by that? Is it the 'human form divine' you are mumbling about? or is it slang you are using? If so, I think it most unbecoming in anyone of our age to ape the vile manners of the present day."

This is a cruel shaft; and the elderly beau, in spite of Poole and Hoby and Rimmel, winces perceptibly.

"You should have investigated matters before going too far," says he, somewhat depressed.

"So should you," retorts she; "you were in a vast hurry, methinks, to relinquish your bride."

"I blame you for it all," returns he fiercely. "Tut, man! Don't think I care for either your blame or censure," says the indomitable old dame, regarding him scornfully. "George Wilding will marry her now, and that puts a finish to it. And I'm not sure I'm not glad of it. Demanding your pardon, Disney, I begin to think he is the better man of the two!"

"Your opinion, madam, is, of course, indisputable," with a low bow. "But yet I flatter myself your granddaughter was willing enough to become Lady Disney, until you—"

"Did you ever hear of young Lochinvar?" asks grandmamma with a maddening cackle; "it reminds me somewhat of your case. And what was that George Wilding said about 'May and December'?" Ha—ha—good, very good!"

"You are an odious old woman!" says my lord, losing all patience.

"Eh? where's your vaunted manners, Disney? Your courtly bow—your incomparable smile? I will trouble you to leave this room, this instant," says she, striking her gold-headed cane upon the floor with considerable force.

"I obey you, madam, willingly—and now take my leave of it, and of the house, and of you, too, I hope, forever," returns he furiously; and striding up the room and through the hall, passes beyond the portals of number seven—never to return!

VARIETIES.

COST OF COLOGNE CATHEDRAL.—The sums which between 1821 and the present time have been contributed to the cathedral building fund, both from public and private sources, amount to 18 millions of marks (£900,000). This amount has been pretty evenly expended on the erection of the towers and the additions to the church. If to this we add the moneys contributed during past centuries, and notably what has been sunk in the colossal foundations and spent in purchasing various necessary parcels of ground, it will appear that the cathedral, as it now stands, represents about 40 millions of marks (£2,000,000).

INFANTS' FOOD.—The French Commission on Hygiene of Infancy, in awarding the prize in a recent competition of essayists, report that the conclusions generally arrived at lead to the following recommendations. No child should be reared on artificial food when the mother can suckle it, but such food is preferable to placing the child with a wet-nurse, poorly remunerated, and living at her own home. For successfully bringing up an infant by hand, it should be placed under the care of a conscientious, careful and experienced woman, should the mother not be well enough to take it in charge. The best milk is that of a cow that has recently calved, or similarly of a goat, to which should be added during the first week a half part of water, and subsequently a fourth, or less, according to the digestive powers of the child. Glass and earthenware should alone be used; no vulcanized India-rubber mouthpieces or vessels containing lead ought to be employed. In the case of robust children, the offspring of healthy parents, when thus practised, hand-rearing gives good results; but with sickly infants the risk is greatly increased, and where several children are thus reared together it generally results

fatally in spite of any hygienic precautions that may be adopted.

LITERARY.

JULES VERNE is going to the province of Oran to explore the marble quarries at Kieber. He is preparing materials for a new work to be called "A Journey to the Land of Marble."

A NEW critical, social, and satirical journal is about to be issued in Dublin, entitled *The Shaughraun*. This is the first journal of its class published in Ireland.

A VOLUME by C. B. Berry, descriptive of a winter visit made by two business men to the United States and Canada, and entitled *The Other Side; How it Struck Us*, will be published during the autumn.

DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES' poem, "The Iron Gate," read at the Atlantic dinner last year, will shortly be issued in a volume by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. The same house will issue Longfellow's new volume, "Ultima Thule," containing the poems he has written since "Kéramos" appeared in 1878.

MISS RHODA BROUGHTON is about to start a magazine. The *Burlington*, shortly to be published, will admit those stories of society of which Ouida's are the supreme type, and will devote itself as closely to fiction as possible. Of course, it will depend for its eventual success upon Miss Rhoda Broughton's own popularity; and she has at least as much chance of catching the ear of the public as Mrs. Henry Wood, who has done so for many years in the *Argosy*.

FASHION NOTES.

AUTUMN cloaks are very long.

PLAIDS prevail in all autumn goods.

VERY long cloaks will again be worn.

SHIRTING is used on all light wool materials.

COLLARS of dresses are made immensely large.

GOLD thread crops out in the new black laces.

BASQUES will not go out of fashion this season.

FEATHER ruchings are revived for dresses and cloaks.

JET collars go with black silk and velvet costumes.

LIGHT wool materials will be *de rigueur* until cold weather.

BROCADED fabrics, velvet, silk and wool will be in high favour.

HOODS appear on many sacques, as well as on cloaks and mantles.

PLAIN skirts, with a single narrow balayouse flounce, will be much worn.

VELVET brocades take precedence of all dress fabrics for the coming season.

PLUSH will be more used than fur for lining cloaks and wraps this winter.

ALL sorts of pelerines, fichus, shoulder capes, round capes, and mantles are worn as street wraps.

WHITE satin, white nun's veiling, and lace make a lovely combination for bridesmaid's dresses.

RED, heliotrope, and shades of ecru and old gold are the favourite colours of the plush linings of cloaks.

UNCERTAIN shades of green and blue, combined with every imaginable shade of red, prevail in plaids.

TERRANS of white and blue serge, bound around the brim with red cashmere scarfs, will be worn by little children.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

PART II of Grove's "Dictionary of Music" has been published. It extends to the title of "Palestrina."

THE late Miss Neilson was so idolized in America that the photographers are now selling her photographs literally by thousands, so general is the desire of playgoers to possess a *souvenir* of the eminent actress now lost to the stage.

THE celebrated critic, M. Francisque Sarcey, has lately called attention to a plague-spot of the French stage, namely, the enormous expenses entailed upon actresses for dressing in their modern parts. Such a state of things can only act against the morality of dramatic art.

SINGING trashy musical hall songs is not a very high class of musical work, but it pays well in London, where favourite singers of this kind of melodies maintain their apartments, with servants, carriages, etc., on their pay for appearing in as many as a dozen different resorts in a single evening.

MR. ARTHUR SULLIVAN writes his compositions in a rather firm but small hand; very precise, and generally clear; no rough stroke, as in Beethoven; no small corrections, as in Mozart; no calligraphic and microscopic changes, as in Haydn. Two qualities shine especially in his music-writing, as in his handwriting—elegance and persistence.

A CONGRESS of church musicians is to be held at the Church of St. Paul, at Milan, this month, to discuss, *inter alia*, the foundation of a Gregorian chapel at Rome, the reform of the organ in Italian churches, the merits of an "American pedale," and the music prescribed, permitted, tolerated and prohibited in the Roman Catholic Church. There will also be a discussion on choral organs. It is stated that Abbe Amelli will preside.

ONE of Ole Bull's tricks was, when he had diminished his tone to a nearly inaudible pianissimo, to continue the attitude, as if he was playing, but actually having drawn off the bow entirely from the violin holding it in the air, and producing no tone whatever; while his audience, in raptures at the softness of his really inaudible sighs, made ear-trumpets of their hands and bent forward, eager to catch the sound which did not exist. Then the violinist, as if suddenly awakened from a trance, bowed to the enraptured audience.

FREQUENTLY as the late Miss Neilson gave her autograph during her last tour, she seldom wrote any quotations save two; and, in their deep and solemn meaning, they seem to have gone forth mournfully, and almost prophetically, from her heart. They were—

"Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again." (poor Juliet's words) and the well-known line from the French.

"*Shut lease, tout casse, tout passe!*"