

THE FAREWELL OF THE ARAB HOSTESS.

(Translated from the French of Victor Hugo.)

Since naught thy sojourn in our clime delays,
The palm-tree's shadow, nor the golden maize,
Nor plenty, nor repose;
Nor e'en young hearts that flutter at thy voice,
When our sweet sisters on some hill rejoice
To dance at daylight's close;

Farewell, young stranger! I myself have girt
(Lest mid sharp stones he cling thee to thy girt)
The saddle on thy horse:
He paws the earth—his back, firm, smooth, and round,
Gleams like a column of black marble, found
Amidst a torrent's course.

O restless youth! why art thou not of those
Who ne'er forsake the indolent repose
Of tent or leafy home!
Who wondrous tales in dreaming ears receive,
And sigh, while seated by their doors at eve,
Among the stars to roam.

Had'st thou but willed it, some kind Arab maid
Had, doubtless, lived beneath our cabin's shade
Thy fancies to obey.
And with fond care, while singing thee to sleep,
Had framed a fan of cool fresh leaves to keep
The insect swarms away.

But thou must go; all day, all night alone!
As thy swift courser spurs each flinty stone,
A shower of sparks is born:
While the blind demons that career by night
Against thy falchion in their beadling fight
Their pinions oft have torn.

Should'st thou return, climb yonder mountain black,
(See! from afar it seems a camel's back)
Our hamlet to spy:
To mine own hut its hive-shaped roof will guide,
And the one door that opens on the side
From which the swallows fly.

Should'st thou return not, think upon the land
Where sweet-voiced maidens, a barefooted band,
Dance blithely on the lea;
O white young stranger, brilliant passage-bird,
Think that, perchance, more hearts than one are stirred
By tender dreams of thee!

Farewell! Ride onwards; of our Sun beware,
Which gilds the dark skin, but which burns the fair;
Beware of trackless sands.
Shun the lone hare that crawls with trembling pace,
And those who circle in the desert trace
With white mysterious wands!

Montreal.

GEO. MURRAY.

THE MAJOR'S MARRIAGE.

My wife always says it was my fault! Well, what if it was? The major might have done a great deal worse. Being such an unbusiness-like sort of a fellow, it's a wonder that he didn't do worse. He has his father to thank for that, as well as for some other things.

I am a solid man in more senses than one; there ain't many wealthier, as far as money goes, in the Western city I hail from. I've always had a good appetite and a better digestion ever since I first came to the shore of the great lake, a barefooted boy with ten cents in my pocket. So, while the ten cents have been growing into millions, I haven't grown thin, and I don't mean to pretend that I am anywhere near as active at seventy-two as I was at twenty-two. I stick to facts, and I suppose I did come down rather heavy from that omnibus-step.

It had snowed and rained for a week—hard. Now everybody knows what the streets in Chicago are capable of under such circumstances. It isn't quite so bad as in the time old settlers tell you about, when a loaded team went down into the earth in front of the court house and disappeared for ever. No; candidly, the streets are improved since then; but, naturally, water on ground as level as a table-top will stand in huge puddles when that ground is soaked, and the traffic of a city passing through such puddles riles them a considerable quantity. The North side omnibus stopped right on the edge of one of these horrible lakes, and I had to jump it. I suppose I might have called to the driver to go on, but I've never looked out much for other people to wait on me; my way is to go ahead myself. So I went ahead and landed all right, but somehow or other my leap shook the old stage tremendously, and the horses started off. I heard a slight shriek and turned round just in time to see a girl, who must have been coming out behind me, tossed off the high step, like a feather, into the mud. I was so scared that the only thing I could think of was to roar at the driver and threaten him with State's prison; but he was Dutch, and didn't either understand or didn't care. But the girl was as quick and light as a cat, had fallen on her feet and was picking up a roll of music out of the black water.

"Oh, dear, dear!" she was saying to herself when I got to her, in a shaky-kind of voice, as if she were ready to cry.

"Are you hurt?" I asked her, pretty sharp, but she didn't answer me; just stood and looked at her music, and her shoes, and her gloves, and her daubed dress-skirt, and then put out a foot plastered with mud up to the ankle so that you couldn't see the shoe at all, and looked at it. "Oh, what shall I do!" she said, and then she realized at last that some one was speaking to her, and she looked up at me with black, soft, childlike-looking eyes, full of tears. There was a lamp close by, so I could see her quite plain. It was about seven or half-past seven in the evening, and two days before Christmas. I had been looking up some presents for my grandchildren, Margaret's boy and girl; they have their tree at the old place, and my wife makes a mighty fuss about it. The State street shops were so crowded that it was pretty hard on a stout old party like me—in fact, it was as

much as a man's life was worth to get near the counters at all, generally speaking; but they knew me at most of them—but to return to my young woman.

"I am sure you are hurt," I said to her. "Wait I will get a carriage to take you home." "Oh, no, indeed," she replied, in a hurry. "I am not hurt—I do not want a carriage." But while she spoke two teardrops rolled down her cheeks, and she held the skirt of her dress out between her thumb and finger, and looked at it again. It was heavy with mud.

"Well, then, what are you crying about?" asked I, a little out of patience at being scared nothing but not really cross, for her eyes had for the look of Baby Maggie's when she is grieved, and some women are just fools enough to cry over spoiled clothes—they can't help it.

"Oh!" said she, "I had an engagement to play for dancing, and I need the money terribly. I cannot go in this state, and I have no time to wash my dress. Oh, dear, I must go back home!"

I looked at her steadily one minute, but she didn't notice me any more, she was watching for a far down-town stage. Her story might be true, for her face was thin and white—one of these round faces that ought to be plump—and her babyish eyes were larger than they had a right to be.

"Never mind," said I, all of a sudden, "you shall keep your engagement—you see if you don't. Where is it?" I added, to make things as straight as possible.

"At Mrs. Starr's, 94 Dearborn Avenue," she answered, quite simply.

"I know her well," says I.

"She is very particular," said the girl. "I couldn't go to her house like this."

"No," says I, "but look here. In the next block, across the street, is a nice little shop, where you can get the mud cleaned off. Come on, I'll show it to you."

She hesitated, looked at me and looked up the street doubtfully.

"Come on," said I. "It's only a few steps, and I'm in a hurry."

Well, she went with me to the little cleaning and repairing establishment. I knew the people, and that they would do well by her; in fact, I had helped Christine Hanson along when her husband broke his leg in my lumber-yard, and she was a grateful woman. I explained to Mrs. Hanson how it was that I accidentally jostled a young lady from the omnibus-step into the mud, and requested her to exert herself. Christine was ready to serve me, and promised to turn the young lady out as good as new in twenty minutes, all but her shoes.

"Those are too bad," she said, shaking her head.

"Send in to the nearest shop for some more," said I, taking out my purse; "and get some clean copies of this music." But the girl started up from the chair by the counter.

"No—oh, no, sir," she said. "Thank you—I cannot."

"Madam," said I, "I have been the means of spoiling your shoes, and I have a right to make compensation for your loss."

"It is out of the question, sir," she answered, very gently; but gentle as she was, I couldn't stir her one inch. I was quite at the end of my arguments when Mrs. Hanson, a very sensible woman, struck in.

"Borrow de money, miss. Mr. Prentiss is so good, he vill wait long."

The young woman looked more hopefully on this proposal.

"But I am afraid I shall never pay it," she murmured; "unless you shall happen to want music for a little dance some time—I play either harp or piano."

"I do," said I—"that settles it all." And I engaged her at once to come the next evening to my house—we always have a small gathering on Christmas Eve—handed her a ten-dollar bill, and was going off in some haste, when she laid her hand on my arm to stop me.

"It is too much, sir; I only want five dollars," she said.

Then I got enraged.

"Young lady," I said, "I am not used to being stirred up and contradicted, and refused the privilege of making up pecuniary losses. I have always passed for an honest man. You ask any man in the city what Peter Prentiss's reputation is. I have been poor myself, but I never was so proud as to be unfair to other people. Good-evening!" and so I shut the door in her face and left her.

I walked home from Clark street pretty fast, for it was snowing again, and my house is some little distance. A tremendous west wind had risen, and came tearing over the city right from the Rocky Mountains; it was enough to chill the blood in a man's veins. I declare when I opened the door at home with my latchkey, and felt the glow inside, and saw through the open door the bright room where my wife and Margaret sat making their things for the tree, I couldn't help thinking of that girl I had just left, going about the city alone in her thin "water-proof"—and plenty of other women like her, and even worse off—and a great shiver went over me as I hung up my overcoat. I told my wife and Margaret all about it, and while I was in the middle of my story the major came into the room and I had to begin it again. Margaret laughed and chaffed me a good deal. "I don't really think that it was I who threw the young woman off the steps. It was the stupid driver who didn't know she was getting down, and started his horses when he heard me jump."

The major was in full swallow-tail, and said

he was going to Mrs. Starr's, and would observe if my *protégé* arrived there. My son, the major, is good-looking and a good fellow—a fine, manly fellow—and I'm proud of him. But he's a very different man from his father; and if his father had been able to do no more for him than my father did for me, I don't know as the major would have got along as well as I did; for he's romantic—was always mooning about over poetry-books when a boy, couldn't be made to take any interest in lumber as he grew up, which was a pity; but I got over it. When the war broke out, he blazed up into a fury of patriotism and enlisted at nineteen, fought the war through, came home and settled down steadily to romance, wrote poems in magazines and mooned worse than ever. He attended a little to the business to please me, and he went into society with his sister, but never cared for business or pleasure. After Margaret got married he went out as seldom as he could, and never seemed to have the faintest idea of bringing us a daughter-in-law to take Margaret's place, though he was getting on in life. Still, I don't mean to say I was dissatisfied with my major. He was a good son and a gentleman, and if he had his fancies—why, he could afford to have them.

"Well, Elliot," said I, next morning at breakfast, "was the young woman there all right?"

"I think so," he answered, rather slowly, as if he wasn't sure of anything, looking into his coffee-cup and stirring it moonily; "there was a young girl dressed in black, who played the harp. She looked very tired and sad. I wondered if the other girls who were dancing saw her and felt the difference."

"I wonder you didn't ask her to dance, El, my boy," said I. "It would have been quite in your line."

The major smiled faintly; he didn't appreciate my little joke, and my wife remarked very sensibly, that the girl being paid for her time, of course, preferred to earn her money, and was probably contented with her position. Nothing more was said on the subject, and I forgot all about my *protégé* as they called her.

But when I came home at night there she sat in the hall patiently waiting. I believe I told her to come early on account of the children. When she saw me she got up and came rather timidly to speak to me.

"I am afraid, sir," said she, "that I offended you last evening. I beg you to excuse it, and to let me thank you for your kindness to a poor stranger."

"It's all right," said I, trying to make her feel comfortable. "I couldn't well do any less after causing the accident."

She was a little thing, come to notice her, and all in black. She looked so small and forlorn and strange in the big hall, that I showed her into the parlour myself, and asked her if she didn't want to see if the harp was in tune.

While the children were dancing, Margaret said to me, "Papa, do you know that your *protégé* is very interesting? Her eyes are beautiful; she is lovely when she smiles; look at her now when she is watching the children. Oh, see Bertie doing his hornpipe! Oh, papa, was ever anything so cunning in this world?"

My daughter leaned forward and forgot all but her son, and I was a good deal taken up with the little fellow's steps myself—in fact, it was superior dancing for a six-year old. Margaret says so, and I believe it. When he finished and made his pretty bow, a good many clapped, and the little musician joined softly, as if she couldn't help it. The children had made acquaintance with her somehow in calling for the tunes they liked, and they seemed to think she belonged to them; she was so small and quiet, I really believe the chickens took her for another child. So when we all went to the dining-room, where the tree was set up—the servants coming in from the opposite door to get their presents, and the young lady, the only person in the house left outside—little Bertie suddenly rushed back of his own accord and led her in resolutely by the hand. She tried to stop by the door, but he insisted upon her coming in to see the tree so determinedly that she had to do it, and afterwards the major got a chair for her by the door. Nothing ever puts Margaret out, and she never puts anybody else out. My daughter, Mrs. Sinclair, is an uncommonly sweet woman; she took down some little thing from the tree—something of black lace—and carried it herself to the lonely-looking stranger. The girl's face flushed up as she sat looking at Margaret, and all at once she was quite a different person—for a moment I should scarcely have known her. She went quietly back to the parlour in a short time, and played steadily all the rest of the evening. At twelve our little frolic broke up, and then my *protégé* thanked Margaret again and all of us, she said, "for our kindness to her," and said good-night quite prettily, put on her thin cloak and started off in the storm. Then the major made the first step.

"I won't stand it," said he; and he got into his ulster, took a heavy shawl that hung up handy, and started after her. We sat and looked at each other.

"That boy is crazy," says his mother; "what a cold he'll catch! Why didn't you stop him, Peter?"

"I couldn't, my dear," says I, laughing.

"I'm an old man."

"Elliot is very kind-hearted," said Margaret, looking doubtful.

"So he is, Maggie," said I, "and worse—he's romantic!"

We sat by the fire talking for nearly two

hours before the major came in, looking quite alert, as he used to when he was home on furlough.

"It is a terrible night," said he, shaking snow from his coat. "Wouldn't it have been a shame for me to have let that little young lady go home alone? The cars are blocked by the snow, and we had to walk over to the west side in the teeth of the wind. I don't believe she could have done it by herself, poor thing!"

"Who is she?" says his mother. "Did you find out, Elliot?"

"Yes, she is Miss de Lisle," said the major, holding his hands to the fire. "She made me go in to get warm, and I saw her father. I should think he was French, and he appears like a gentleman. He is partially paralysed; he looked very ill. They two seem to be quite alone. I believe they are worthy of your kind help, mother."

"I will see about it, Elliott," said my wife, sleepily getting out of her chair.

My wife before long gave one of her swell parties, and had Miss de Lisle with her harp in the orchestra. How she managed it with the other musicians I don't know. I presume it was a cash business, but it helped the young lady. I noticed her myself a great deal that night, for I was awfully tired of it all, and I am not allowed to go to bed as I should be glad to do on such occasions. How can it be amusing to watch a lot of young fools going solemnly through that stupid performance they call the German? And by two o'clock in the morning there's no one left to talk to, and you've got no brains left to talk if there was. So, as I sat in the corner, half asleep, I took to noticing my *protégé*. She looked like a child among the other musicians. She was very neat and trim in her dress. She had a black lace thing round her neck, probably the same Margaret had given her. She played, played, played! and never moved her eyes from one direction, while her little bits of hands ran about, twanging the strings. I changed my place to see what she was looking at, but I could not find out. It might have been my wife, who stood in the doorway with the major—she had on her diamonds and a new dress from Paris. My old lady has loved finery ever since I first saw her behind the milliner's counter in Milwaukee, and I shouldn't wonder if she imported a dress to be buried in.

When the musicians went to get supper the major joined them, and offered Miss de Lisle his arm. Step number two. He said afterwards that she was so shy and frightened at going alone with these strange men, that he was sorry for her. He went home with her again—this time in our carriage.

"Elliot," I remarked, very seriously, when I heard of it, "take care that you don't do mischief by giving this little girl the notion that she is a fine lady. Don't you see, it will only make it harder for her to rough it."

"She is as fine a lady as any I know, father," said the major, gravely. His mother opened her eyes and her mouth.

"My dear boy!" said she, "you have always been aristocratic—to hear you talk so of a girl who goes round playing at houses for money! I hate to have people mixed up so! What is the good of being at the top of the first society, I wonder?"

"My dear mother," says Elliot, quietly. "Miss de Lisle is a refined and accomplished lady. She also has a most lovely disposition. You should see her devotion to her poor father; it is wonderful and touching."

"Have you seen it, Elliot?" says I.

"Often," says the major, without any hesitation, "and have tried to help her."

Well, there was no reason why he shouldn't help her if he felt like it, and so I told his mother afterwards, but she wasn't satisfied. She is very exclusive—she tells me she always was; she says the classes should be kept separate, and words that would be used in describing her daughter, Mrs. Sinclair, ought not to be applied to a common working person. With these arguments and a good many more, she made me go and visit the De Lisle family and see what I could do. I started out one day, though it was bitter weather—we had an unusually severe winter that year. Not liking the job I had undertaken, I was in a hurry to get it off my mind. I don't think I could do what my wife wanted either; but I couldn't stand so much talk, and so I was bound to try.

It was terribly cold. I knew that by casting a glance seaward—so to speak—before I felt it. One of the streets on which my house faces—I have a corner lot, of course—dumps itself into Lake Michigan, a couple of blocks or so away. Instead of being dull gray, the lake was heaped up in high blue-green waves, brownish on the top further out, where they were tossing about like a malicious imitation of the ocean. The grizzly bear of a Rocky Mountain west wind was loose again, howling over the flat country and freezing everything up under it. You couldn't be sure of your nose or your ears or the tips of your fingers if you lost sight of them a minute; facing the wind was like being cut in two with scissors, if it was at your back your clothes felt about as thick as paper. I went in the Madison street cars, for I would not take my horses out on such a day, and I noticed that the drivers were changed very frequently—as fast, I suppose, as their features thawed out to be available. It was a long way, the house was almost out on the prairie, and I had no little trouble in finding it. They had two rooms upstairs. The woman who opened the door told