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[From The Independent.]

TO MISS V. M. ON HER WEDDING MORNING.

BY A BRIDE-MAID.

Go seek thy widowed mother,
She hath wrought a faithful part;
And offer her thy heartfelt thanks,
E'en now, before you part.

Then kneel beside thy couch,
And breathe an earnest prayer,
That the blessings of the loved and lost,
May rest upon thee there.

Then sing thy last adieu
To thy childhood's happy bower;
It hath shielded thee in love and truth,
Through many a weary hour.

Fulfil in Hymen's chain
A noble, glorious part;
And, till the hour of death, still let
Fond heart respond to heart.

And if thou hast one thought
From thy wedded life left free,
Then, in the name of friendship pure,
I'll claim that thought of thee.

*The deceased Father of the Bride.

[From the Courier and Enquirer.]

SCENES IN THE EAST.

Constantinople, April 20th, 1849.

Never shall I forget that sunny April afternoon, when, seated alone on the summit of the Acropolis, 150 feet above the plain, I took a long farewell look of the most glorious scene this world of ours affords. Above me was the matchless Parthenon, discolored by time, dismantled by theft, and defaced by violence, and yet proudly up-springing heavenwards as the sublimest material creation of the human intellect, and the imperishable type of all architectural perfection. Just, before, on the same rocky platform, the colonnaded Propylæ like a grand frontispiece, cast their massive shadows; on one side, by the verge of the crag whence leaped the despairing Ægus, the miniature Temple of Victory gleamed like an unmarred gem; and on the other lay the broken cellars and corridors and porticos of the Erechtheum, where grew the sacred olive by which the "blue-eyed goddess" vindicated her title to the Attic soil, where rested the ashes of old Cecrops, the father of a god-like race, and where, poised on a brazen chariot and clad with helmet and buckler, stood that statue, whose spear, flashing high above the battlements, beckoned the distant mariner on to the gates of the Immortal City. Away to the north, the Temple of Theseus, the magnificent mausoleum of the friend of Hercules, with its walls and columns and friezes still entire; the Agora, with its mouldering monuments yet erect, but robbed of the little beauty age had spared, by the wretched hovels which narrowly hemmed them in; and far beyond, the stilly grove of the Academy, where Plato uttered those words of wisdom which will ever go echoing down to the vale of time. To the east, the stony and now waterless bed of Illus; the ploughed fields where once bloomed the gardens of the Lyceum; the grass-grown hollow in the hill side, which was the ancient Stadium, the marble-cased arena of racers and athletes; and nearer, the sixteen Corinthian columns, that stupendous as they are, stand as but a sorry fragment of that famed Temple of Olympian Jove, which Athens in its infancy commenced, and Rome in its dotage completed. To the south, the yet distinct outlines of the Theatre of Bacchus, where the tragic poets first won their fabled laurels, and where the "old man eloquent" thrice received his golden crown; the rock-

bound hill where old Musæus sung and was buried; and the path by which the Panathænic procession, with its divine peplos and consecrated utensils, used to wind its glittering way from Eleusis up to the shrine of the Parthenon. And to the west, the Pnyx, where once the Athenian multitude stormed in debate, and the very rock-hewn bema, whence Demosthenes 'wielded the fierce democratic,' shook the arsenal and fulminated over Greece; nearer, piercing the solid precipice, the very dungeons where Socrates yielded up his mighty spirit; and nearer still, the Hill of Mars, where sat in darkness the death-dooming Areopagus, and where, in full view of the most splendid edifices humanity ever dedicated to divinity, the dauntless apostle of the Gentiles declared to the men of Athens that God is a spirit, and dwelleth not in temples made with hands, (and but an hour before, I had read that masterly address in the very Greek and on the very spot.) Hymittus, its thymy sides redolent with honey as of old—Pentelcus, its heights yet glistening with their marble stores—Parnes, its fortress still bristling with bowers and bastions—the 'hill Cofonos,' stern and strong as when Sophocles first gave it immortality—Anchesmus, frowning as when the Cynics made it their fit retreat, the great olive wood still trembling in the breeze—the Attic plain, sweeping with all its ancient majesty from the mountains to the sea—the Piræus, expanding its broad arms as when it harbored countless triremes—and "unconquered Salamis," with its blue waters flashing as proudly, under the sun, as when they were strewn with Persian wrecks and streaked with Persian blood;—all filled up and coloured the magnificent panorama. Never have I viewed a spot where the heroic Past was so gloriously mirrored in the beautiful Present, and where the works of God and man had so harmoniously united to produce a scene, that should enchant the imagination, stimulate the heart, and gratify every faculty of the soul.

I sat—

"Till my sense ached with gazing to behold
The scenes my earliest dreams had dwelt upon;"

then sadly turned from that memorable sight forever.

The next morning, on board the French Government steamer *Rhamses*, I was speeding down the unromantic shore of Attica to "Sunium's marbled steep;" the next evening was winding among the picturesque Cyclades; and the following afternoon was anchored in the mountain gulf of Smyrna. The city of Smyrna, however justly it was once styled the crown of Ionia and the ornament of Asia, finds its only glory now in a sorry old castle, squalid streets, ragged houses, and a motley rabble of 150,000 *sans culottes* villainously mauling every known dialect under heaven. In a brief hour or two we were merrily dashing northwards, and the morning sun rose upon us cleaving the same waters that once laved the walls of proud Ilium, and washed the keels of Agamemnon's fleet. Snow-crowned Ida, glittering as divinely as ever in the distance, Scamander lazily, as of old, dragging its slow length along the plain, and the huge, unsightly burrow of earth they call Achilles' Tomb, were all that told us we were looking on the grave of Trojan glory. Charging the fierce waters of the Hellespont, we soon passed the strait which Xerxes bridged, less to the confusion of ancient Greeks than modern Frenchmen, and which Leander swam for Hero, as, so help me Cupid, I ne'er would swim for all the beautiful girls in Christendom.—We stemmed till evening the impetuous current of the Dardanelles, and then glided into the smooth waters of the Sea of Marmora, the stars streaming a flood of light above me, as only Eastern stars can stream, and throats

screaming the *Marseillaise* around as only Frenchmen's throats can scream.

As I went on deck the next morning, the boat was at anchor just in the mouth of the Golden Horn, and Constantinople, in all its indescribable uniqueness, was before me.—The thick-ranged colonnades and clustering cupolas of Santa Sophia, springing from the hill-side athwart the sky, the spires and pinnacles of the Seraglio gleaming amid ever-green groves, the swelling domes and tapering minarets of a hundred mosques, the dark forests of cypresses stretching like vast funeral palls over the cemeteries, the gaily painted kiosks mirroring their airy forms in the waters, the arched aqueducts and pagoda-roofed fountains, the bewildering mass of houses and gardens receding from every shore to the very verge of the horizon, Mount Olympus "high and hoar" lifting up his snowy head far in the background, the innumerable caïques filled with strange costumes skimming the waves, the monstrous three-deckers of the Sultan displaying blood-red flags emblazoned with the star and the crescent, the thousand mercantile craft with their quaint forms and barbaric streamers, and the broad silver tides of the Golden Horn, the Bosphorus and the Marmora sparkling in the morning sun, and like a mighty foil heightening the wondrous effect of the whole—it was all like a glorious vision of the imagination, some fabled scene of Eastern story or song.

I landed and beheld the city within. I found the streets narrow and rough, the highways of donkeys and the lairs of dogs, here overhung with shapeless mouldering tenements, and there lined high up with dead mad-plastered walls; yet the long rows of bearded Turks picturesque in attire and sculpturesque in attitude, smoking their *chibouks* in the open booths—the Armenians in flowing fur-trimmed robes, moving with dignified step, but earnest air, about their places of business—the Dervishes with coarse brown wrappers and rimless sugar-loaf hats—the Emirs with their immense green turbans to denote their descent from the Prophet—the women with their white muslin yashmees and linen caftans—the heterogeneous crowd of Greeks, Albanians, Tartars, Bulgarians, Jews, and Franks, that, unsympathizing and taciturn, went jostling by—the oft-recurring cries to prayer from the minarets, responded to on all sides by abluitions and genuflexions—the funeral procession conveying to the cemetery the exposed and richly dressed corpse, with a hurried pace in order to relieve the soul from the torment it suffers till the burial of the body—the blithe companies of Greek dancers (for it was the holidays of the Greek Easter) that came tripping down the streets to songs and the music of tamborines and bagpipes—the minstrelsy and riot that proceeded from every coffee room and wine shop—the cross-legged groups of idlers, in some places more quiet than the rest, pondering over chess-boards or listening to the sensual romances of some pilgrim story-teller—the swingings and dancings, and all the strange merry-makings in the Champ des Morts, or Field of the Dead—the gilded Arabics, drawn by gaily decked oxen, and freighted with Turkish ladies, languishing on soft cushions, with nails reddened with henna and eyelids blackened with kohl—the tray-crowned vendors of sherbert and sweatmeats that flitted about with hoarse guttural cries—the brazen water pipes that peeped from every wall and invited the dry-passer-by to thirst no longer—the hieroglyphic inscriptions in gold from the Koran on every fountain's front—the vaulted bazaars crowded with life and teeming with every rare stuff and costly luxury—the granite-walled, iron-gated khans, sheltering strangers from every eastern clime—the big

baths, with their glass-studded cupolas admitting the light of heaven upon a swarthy, sweaty, soap-besmeared crowd of nondescript creatures, too uncouth for tritons or nereids, and too amphibious for fawns or satyrs—evening made hateful by cimmerian darkness broken here and there by the paper lantern of some belated visitor, flickering like an *ignis fatuus* through the gloom—and night made hideous by the heavy, sullen tread of military patrols, and the knell-dike ringing of watchmen's iron-headed staves on the pavements, by the howlings of the ten thousand dogs that range the streets, and the hootings of the numberless owls that brood over the abodes of the dead;—all this combined to make the original scene more fantastic, though less pictorial, and more dramatic, though less poetical.

The Seraglio is no longer inaccessible to strangers, and by aid of a firman, purchased at a high price from the Government, I have visited, with a small party of French and English, this far-famed palace. Crossing the Golden Horn from the Suburb Tophane, we landed at the Gardeners's Gate, one of the twenty-eight entrances of Stamboul, and a few minute's walk brought us to the Sublime Porte, the spacious unornamented archway from which the Ottoman Empire first derived its name. Escorted by a couple of very consequential State constables, we passed through into the outer court of the Seraglio, a large plain area surrounded by buildings formerly used as infirmaries for the sick and as lodges for the menials of the palace. From this we proceeded to the inner court, which was laid out in verdant grass plots and intersected with paved footways. Around, were arcades leading into various offices and kitchens, and at the extremity was the justice hall, where the Grand Divan formerly held its sittings. Entering a narrow vestibule, the gentlemen of the party were made to exchange their boots for slippers, and we were ushered into that confused mass of building so long the residence of the Ottoman Sultans. We were conducted through all the audience halls and saloons of the palace, and the baths and private apartments of the Harem. Though many of the rooms were rich in appearance, they presented little of that extraordinary splendour with which travellers have been accustomed to invest the unknown interior of the Seraglio. The walls and ceilings generally were wainscoted and gilt, in the Moorish style, and the floors were covered with elegant palm-leaf matting. The furniture was far less sumptuous than that I have seen in other palaces, and there were no statues or paintings. Almost the only works of art were a few French engravings representing the battle scenes of Napoleon, and certain tablets inlaid with gold and porcelain, and diversified with flowers, miniature landscapes, and inscriptions from the Koran. The window-latticed halls of the Harem, and the sky-lighted chambers where the "Father of all the Sovereigns of the Earth" used to go to sport with his women and mutes, displayed no ornament. The throne of his Serene Highness was quite an ordinary affair, and in interest was far outmatched by the twenty golden and magnificently jewelled State keys of the Sublime Porte. The gardens around the palace abound in many Oriental plants and flowers, but are much exceeded in beauty by many private grounds in England. In short, the Turkish Seraglio has been indebted for its fame more to the unequalled superabundance of its natural situation, and the jealousy with which its precincts have been guarded, than to any thing actually done for it by human taste and skill. The present Sultan has never made it his residence, preferring one of the new palaces on the Bosphorus, to a place associated with so many private intrigues and public iniquities.