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Our paper circulates in every neighborhood, and is read by nearly every family in the county—and therefore affords a convenient and cheap means for the business men of our county—the merchant, mechanic, and all others—to extend the knowledge of their location, and business. We should like to insert "A Card" for every Mechanic, Merchant, and Professional man in the county. We have plenty of room without encroaching upon our reading columns, and no man in a legitimate business will lose by advertising extensively—for, as a general rule, the more extensively a man advertises the greater will be his profits.

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THE HANGING GUEST.

BY WALTER K. KELLY.

It is a grand discovery of our day, and one that has furnished the material for many a distinguished author's renown, that nothing in the world is more interesting, dignified, and edifying, than the life of a respectable robber. The gold is your only real palace of romance; blood is the lemonade of modern literature. We Russians must not remain behind the age, we also have our tales of robbers, if we would not appear in the eyes of all civilized Europe as a people utterly devoid of all culture and taste. For the honor of our country, therefore, I will for once constrain myself to conform to the fashion of the day; but on condition that it shall be for the first and last time in my life, and that no one shall a second time demand such a sacrifice of me. I will relate a simple anecdote which I had from persons of undoubted veracity, and who, moreover, had an excellent nack of telling a story. It is one that made a deep impression upon me, as an instance of the marvellous ways of divine justice.

Two versts from—

One condition more. You must allow me to premise that my robber is none of your virtuous sort. I tell my tale only for the amusement of my readers, pehaps also for their instruction, but by no means for the purpose of acquiring for myself the reputation of a philosopher of the "young school" of literature; moreover, I rather pride myself on not being able to comprehend their philosophy.

Two versts from W—a, upon an eminence between a wood, a morass, and a river, at some distance from the high road, stands a wooden country house with a green and antiquated roof. Here usually throughout the summer, and sometimes too, in autumn, resides Gaurila Michailowitch P——, a retired captain, and at present district justice, a very worthy man, as all district justices in the W—a department.

Early one Sunday morning in the month of August, 1830, his worship Gaurila Michailowitch, with his honored lady Praskovya Yegorovna, set off for the city in a britschka to transact sundry urgent matters of business, viz., to go to church, to drink with his reverence and prototype, to eat and be convival with the district attorney, to hear the town news from the commandant's lady, to read the St. Petersburg papers at the district treasurer's, and to play boston at the governor's.—Scarcely had the master and mistress driven from their door, when all the servants followed their example and quitted the house. The butler went to see his cousin in the village; the cook betook himself to the public-house to drink brandy; the cook-maid to the river to catch crayfish; Prochor and Daria went nutting in the wood; Vaska and Natasha strayed to the heath to gather cranberries, &c.; Duna alone remained in the house; Duna, the pearl of the whole W—a department, fair as a lily, fresh as a rose, graceful as a cedar, a prightly virtuous damsel, by her calling a house-maid, by her natural good qualities the favorite of her mistress, the grand object of the frequent visits of the master of the house to the woman's apartments, the victim of an inordinate propensity of the district clerks for kissing, the goddess for whose sake the governor's valet, who like herself had been brought up in the great world, in the Nevska Perspective, neglected the polishing of his master's boots, to the great scandal and indignation of the whole provincial administration;—none but he could appreciate her feelings, none but she could duly estimate the grace of his deportment. They mutually adored each other as only hearts can adore that have taken fire by the Kasan Bridge in St. Petersburg, and they were as happy as none can be but in the country.

Girls shut up in a house by themselves are always afraid of thieves. Duna, therefore, carefully fastened the outer doors, and to avoid thinking of thieves, she went to look at herself in the glass while she waited for a valet, whom she had given to understand that her master and mistress were to spend the whole day in the town. In the pleasantest possible mood Duna arranged her curls, set her necklet in order, tightened her girdle, and hummed a tune, when suddenly there was a gentle rap at the door. "That is he!" and like an arrow she flew and opened it to let him in. "Ah! is it not he?"

"I am your man," replied a deep husky voice as there cautiously entered through the open door a big built fellow in a tattered frieze cloak and faded cap, with a worthy face much in want of the barber's terrible foxy moustaches, and a flux[illegible] nose, a scarred forehead, blue lips, [illegible] thirsty eyes; the very type of the [illegible]man of a city pathouse, or one of the [illegible]ical figures that are only to be [illegible]aton Rosa's paintings. [illegible]nished Duna recoiled, some[illegible] repeated with a sigh from the heart, "It is not he!" Meanwhile the stranger had stepped in, and [illegible]ost coolness closed the door [illegible] it, and put the key in his [illegible] Duna [illegible] "Who do you want? Who are you?" cried Duna, "why do you put the key in your pocket?"

"Don't be alarmed, my little dear," he said, smiling. "I'm come to pay you a visit. The time must have hung heavy on your hands all alone here."

"Not at all. But what do you mean by pocketing the key?"

Instead of answering he went up to her and patted her on the cheek. She sprang back from him.

"Why do you lock the door? Give me the key, or I will cry out."

"That will do you no good. I know very well there is no one in the house."

"A pretty thing, indeed! Come in without your leave or by your leave, and lock the door as if you were in your own house!"

"I always lock the door when I have the luck to be alone with so pretty a girl as you, my angel!" and once more he patted her cheek with his coarse dirty hand. The angry Duna retreated into a corner.

"But who are you? It is very handsome, so it is, to make fun of a girl, and tease her so without any acquaintance."

"I never visit acquaintances," he replied, with an altered look, and a tone that froze the poor girl's blood.

In every antechamber and chancery office, Duna bore the reputation of a girl of spirit. She was no easy conquest. Many a presumptuous clerk had felt the print of her nails in his face to that degree that he was not likely to forget it, though he should live to be a master in chancery. Duna, in fact, did honor to the virtue of St. Petersburg. But a bashful provincial chancery clerk, with his inky fingers, is a trifle to a girl who has been brought up in the Nevska Perspective; and unshaved, broad-shouldered, ugly vagabond, in a freize cloak, with red moustaches and a violent nose, is quite a different sort of thing, and enough to frighten any body.—Duna began to cry.

"Don't cry, my little duck! I won't do you any harm," he said in a softer tone, as he drew near her. Now, this softer tone alarmed her even more, and she involuntarily stretched out her arms to keep him off.

"Who are you, I say?" she cried, in despair, but with an assumption of courage, with a fire, that was gradually extinguished by her gushing tears.

"You shall tell me on the spot who you are."

"Who I am?"

"Yes, who are you? Your calling?—Your name?"

"I am a thief."

"A thief!" she echoed falteringly, turning as white as snow.

"I am a thief by name and a robber by station," he said with a smile, and looking tenderly into her blue eyes; but the smile on his face resembled the ghastly glimmering of the moon upon the foul waters of the morass. This is the approved style in robber-tales, so you see there was no joke in the matter; after such a phrase all sorts of horrors may be expected. Duna was terrified (not at the phrase, but at the smile,) and a cold tremor ran through her frame; but seeing that her visitor was making sport of her uneasiness, she rallied herself a little, and cried out hurriedly, but with a tremulous voice,

"A robber? Poh! what a horrid life."

"Every man to his calling. I had another once; but now, I say, my pretty lass, give me something to eat. I have not put a bit in my mouth these three days. We will have breakfast together, and then—"

With a sudden gesture he threw his arm around her neck to kiss her. The sight of his bristly chin and formidable moustaches charging so fiercely upon her, the sight of his ugly red nose, that merely touched her cheek, put her in a downright passion; and with the strength that makes heroes of us in moments of extreme peril, she pushed the audacious fellow back.

"Hands off, if you please, Mr. Robber! I'd thank you not to frighten me for nothing. I know what you are come for."

"You know, do you? Well what is it then?"

"Oh! I know very well, but allow me to tell you it is a very great shame. I will have you up for it. Give me back the key this moment, and be off.

"Some breakfast," growled the stranger.

"I have no breakfast for you; there is nothing to eat in the whole house. Go breakfast in the public house if you have a mind. By the same token you smell of brandy enough to knock one backwards; I dare say you have made a very good breakfast already."

"What! nothing to eat?" he muttered, knitting his brow, and bending a piercing glance on the girl as he put his right hand down towards his boot. "Do you see this?" said he, showing her a broad bladed knife with small speckles, traces of recently shed blood he had somewhere hastily wiped off on the grass. "I have no time to joke with you."

Poor Duna stared with open eyes, and seemed petrified by his basilisk glances.

"Breakfast!" he shouted.

"Immediately!"

"Be quick! I have no time to lose."

"Take whatever you please; there is some roast meat of yesterday in the cupboard, and some brandy."

"Show me into the parlor, put everything you have got on the table, and stir yourself."

Pale and bewildered, she trotted to the cupboard in the antechamber. He stuck the knife in his boot and followed her step. Bread, brandy, salt, butter, cheese, and cold roast veal, were placed on the table where the proprietors of the house had recently breakfasted, before setting off for the town. He seated himself, seized Duna's arm, and forced her down beside him.

"Well, I say," said he, bolting the fat veal with ravenous verocity, and squinting sideways at his companion, "I gave you a jolly start, didn't I?"

"I believe you did! I wonder who would not be frightened so!"

"You did wrong to stand out against me. If you had done what I wanted at once ——— Your health. Drink a little drop to keep me company."

"I never touch brandy."

"That's a pity; its capital brandy.—What's your name?"

"Catharine Nicola."

"That's a lie," he said, with his mouth full, and scowling on her, I know your name is Avdotya Yeremeyevna."

"Then why do you ask, if you know?"

"To try your candour. Capital brandy to be sure; is there any more of it?

"There is another bottle in the cupboard."

"Have the goodness to bring it here."

"There it is."

"Thank you. By your leave, I'll give you a kiss for it."

Duna no longer dared to resist; she submitted with the best grace she could to the rude kiss, contenting herself with wiping the place where his sharp beard had scratched her tender skin till it almost bled.

"To let you see that I am up to a thing or two," he went on, after he had gulped his third glass of brandy, "I will tell you, that a clerk brought your master 1500 rubles yesterday from Ivanovitch F———, whose case was brought last week before the district court. Is not that true?"

"May be so."

"Well, where does your master keep his money?"

"Really I do not know."

"But I do; we shall soon find it. Avdotya Yeremeyevna, my pet, my darling!"

"What is your pleasure?"

"I wish, my love, you would be sociable."

Poor Duna was forced to make a show of being sociable. The guest was in the happiest humor; he laughed and joked with her. Duna gradually forgot her terrors, grew bolder, defended herself becomingly, nay, laughed aloud, and endeavored to disguise her intense anxiety under a show of cheerfulness, whilst in secret she prayed fervently to Heaven that the red-nosed guest might soon eat and drink his fill, and take his leave, and the incomparable Ivan might soon arrive to indemnify her sensitive heart for this fearful torment.

Alas! Ivan, who had got leave of the governor, left the town, and sped with hasty steps, and with a heart brimful of tenderness and hope, to meet her. He walked not, he flew. Cupid had fastened his own wings to his boots. He flew like an arrow. But on his way lay a brandy shop; there is no road without them. He would have passed by it; but in the shop were his acquaintances, his beloved friends. He made a halt with them for a moment, only a moment, and got tipsy with them. It happened quite against his will; he was even in dispair at it. Altogether it was one of the most memorable victories ever achieved by Friendship over Love.

Meanwhile the ugly vagabond had emptied his sixth glass of brandy. At the seventh he grew pensive, pursed his brows, bit his lips as if a pang shot through his vitals; a dark shadow passed like a cloud over his countenance; suddenly he sprang from his seat, and without intending it, pushed so strongly against his companion, that she almost fell between his feet. He looked round uneasily, took the brandy-bottle, the bread, and a piece of meat from the table, put them all into the fathomless pockets of his cloak, and said, "Thank you for bread and salt—for your hospitality. Gaurila Michailovitch keeps his money in this secretary, eh? Why don't you speak? You see I am not such a bad fellow as you thought at first my pretty chick. I love you—I love you so much, ——— Just tell me what sort of a death you would like best to die? Shall I cut off your head, eh? Or would you rather I should hang you, from that beam for instance? Don't be afraid, only say what you would like best, charming Duna."

"What pleasure can you take in plaguing me so cruelly?" said Duna, not crediting the ugly jester with the red nose could be in earnest.

"Why don't you answer?" he said, examining the secretary and the lock. "I should be glad to know—whether you—would rather—be hanged, or,—Oho!—Gaurila Michailovitch keeps his money under two locks, does he? Stay a bit; it is not the first we have coaxed open." So saying, he took an iron instrument out of his pocket and immediately began to use it upon the lock. Duna stood as if spell-bound in the middle of the room, trembling in all her frame.

"Well, what is it then? Speak out Avdotya Yeremeyevna. Can't you make up your mind? Curse the lock. Avdotya Yeremeyevna, I wait your answer, my precious. This is the strongest lock I've seen this many a day. Will you speak or not?"

The secretary was burst open with a crash.

"Who! what a lot of fine things! Bank notes, and ducats, and watches! They don't go: spoiled most likely. A ring, I don't wan't it. Oh, I'll take these diamonds. Are these all crumbs of office?"

Chatting in this fashion with himself and with Duna, he crammed his pockets with money, watches, and trickets, and then turned abruptly to the half dead girl. "Well, my love, your choice? Waste no time; but tell me, what death will you die?"

"Well, I'm sure, arn't you ashamed, sir? It is a very ugly joke this."

"I am not joking at all, my sweet one!"

"What have I done to you? You have taken whatever you pleased; I did not hinder you."

"That's very true; but do you see, I can't bide leaving eye-witnesses behind me: I wash my hands of them by all means. With others I don't stand on ceremony; but as you, my love, are such a nice good-natured, amiable little dear, I will give you your choice of death. I love politeness: I too have been brought up in St. Petersburg—"

Still she would not believe that he was in earnest.

"Now then let's have it at once; I have no time to lose. Let us put compliments aside. I am extremely sorry, but you must die by my hand. I am not going to be such a fool as to let you live, to tell what sort of moustaches, eyes, nose, clothes, &c., I have got—what I did here, and which way I went. Now Avdotya Yeremeyevna, answer quickly."

Every word of her cold-blooded torturer was a dagger-stroke to her: her whole blood, all the warm current of her life, curdled back upon her heart; her limbs grew icy cold, and floods of tears poured over her inanimate face. She tottered and fell to the floor. In her fall she caught the robber's foot, and kissed it. "Have mercy on me!" she shrieked. "Oh, spare my life, I implore you! I swear to you before the holy Virgin, I will not say a syllable to any one. May I never see Heaven, if I do! For the sake of the blessed St. Nicholas—have compassion upon me! I will pray all my life for you, as for my own father, my brother—"

The inexorable miscreant shook her off from his foot, kicking her in the breast,—In vain she raised her imploring looks and arms towards him; in vain she sought to touch his stony heart with all that intense despair—and the clinging love of a youthful, joyous existence—could breathe into the words, the voice, and the tears of a helpless being. The villain harder than granite, grew every moment more cruel and savage. Raging with impatience, he caught her by the hair, forced back her head, drew his knife from his boot, and was about to plunge it in her throat.

"Oh, oh! for the love of Heaven!" sobbed the unfortunate girl, beside herself at the sight of the terrible knife! "hang me!—hang me! No bloody death!—Mercy!—mercy. Hang me, rather!"

"Ay, ay," he said, with a hideous grin; "so you can speak at last. Why did you not say so at once. I have lost a deal of time already; still I can't refuse you the favor; you are such a nice girl, Duna! You shall die in the pleasentest manner. It is an ugly death, that of the knife. If I might choose myself, I would rather be hanged than knouted, when my time comes! We will look about for a cord."

The wretched girl, powerless in mind and body, through terror, cold as ice, trembling, and almost lifeless, submitted to his commands. The rope was soon found, and the murderer returned with his victim to the same room where the remains of the breakfast still stood upon the table. He threatened to kill her instantly if she stirred from the spot where she stood—placed a chair on the table—and sprang nimbly upon it. Having fastened the rope around the beam, he drew the knife from his boot, cut off the projecting part of the rope, stuck the knife into the beam, and set about making a double running knot on the rope. Duna stood motionless in the middle of the room: heat and cold rushed alternately through her frame; sparks of fire danced before her eyes; she saw nothing; she did nothing but pray, confess her sins, commend herself to all the saints, and mentally bid farewell to all that was dear to her life.

"Presenily, presently, my precious!" said the murderer, going on with his work, "you shall see how nicely I will hang you. I am not a new hand at the job. Do you see now, all is ready, only I'll try whether the rope is strong enough. I would not for the world you should fall to the ground and break your ribs. It is for your interest and my own that ——— Draw the chair away from under my feet."

Duna unconsciously went up to the table, and drew away the chair: whilst the robber held the rope fast in both hands, having slipped it over one arm up to the elbow, to convince himself of its strength, by swinging on it with the whole weight of his body.

"Push the table aside."

Duna did so.

"All right; it is a capital rope; it would bear more than you—you and me together."

He now let go the rope, intending to jump to the ground. Apparently, it was his purpose to startle the poor girl by the bold and sudden leap; but the noose intended for her, gliding along his arm, caught him fast by the wrist. Duna's executioner had, in fact hanged himself by the hand.

Though experiencing the most acute pain, he wished to conceal his critical position from the girl, that she might not avail herself of it to escape. He tried to reach the imprisoned hand with his left; but the weight of his body prevented his bringing his shoulders parallel. Suddenly he began to whirl and fling himself wildly through the air, hoping the rope would snap: but in vain! If he had but the knife in his boot, he might have severed it, or at the worst, he could have cut off his hand, and saved himself by flight. But, unluckily for him, the knife was sticking in the beam. How was he to get at it?

He thought of one means—a desperate one—the last. He collected all his strength, to shake the knife out with a powerful spring. The effort failed.

The weight of his heavy frame dangling in the air by one hand only, his violent efforts, the pressure of the tight-drawn knot, occasioned the villain intense torture: the joints of his arms cracked and began to part; the blood oozed out under the rope from the lacerated skin, and trickled into the sleeve of his cloak; while that of the rest of his frame rushed from the extremities to his head. Every moment it seemed as if the hand would be torn off. He even wished that it might. His anxiety lest the people of the house should return; his dread of being taken in this predicament; impatience, rage; he thought of his misdeeds, of his punishment; all his guilty life; all this possessed his tumultuous imagination, and brought his dark soul to despair. Cold sweat broke from his forehead. In spite of his tiger like endurance, a cry of agony burst at length from his iron bosom.

Duna, petrified, and thinking only of death, had hitherto looked on with an idiotic indifference. For a long time she did not understand what he was doing, and made no attempt to understand it.—True she was still standing upright like a living thing, but living she was not. The involuntary cry of the murderer waked her, however from her trance. She saw him bleeding, as if it were half a dream: she saw blood on the floor—a hideous gaping mouth, with great misshapen teeth, red fiery eyes starting from the socket; she read his anguish in his ghastly distorted features, and guessed at last what had happened. Hope animated her; she began to think of deliverance.

"Avdotya! push the table nearer," said the robber, in altered, but still harsh and commanding accents, that terrified her again and compelled her to blind obedience. Once more she lost her presence of mind, and pushed the corner of the table towards him. The villian reached it with the toes of one foot; he raised himself up a few lines. It was for him a moment of heavenly enjoyment. Never in his whole life had he known one like it—not even after the most successful murder. His agony was less intolerable; he drew breath again; but his left hand, which he tried to use to free his right, was benumed and powerless. The knot, too, had grown too tight; the reprobate felt that he could do no more without aid.

"Avdotya Yermeyevna!—kind friend!—good girl! do me the favor; jump upon the table; untie my arm—pray do; I will not kill you; I only meant to frighten you. Oh! how my head swims!"

The miscreant's torture touched the kind-hearted girl's soul. The feeling of compassion not unfrequently extinguishes in women the thought of their own danger. That women thinks with her heart, has been said a thousand times since the invention of printing. In Duna's bosom, compassion prevailed over fear, and stifled the voice of self-preservation. She sprang upon the table, and labored long and hard at the knot. She could not do it.

"Do me the favor, sweet, sweet Duna! Fetch a knife—cut the cursed rope—I am dying with pain."

The girl jumped off the table, and ran to the pantry. Poor creature! she little knew the return the red-nosed guest was prepared to make for her kindness of heart! She found a knife; she hurried back; she was on the threshold of the scene of torture, when the table on which the robber had rested his foot turned over with a loud noise. He had upset it in endeavoring to change his feet. Once more he was swinging with all his weight in the air. A piercing yell told the renewal of his former tortures. Duna stopped short at the door. His hideously distorted face struck her with involuntary horror; she thought it was Satan's own feature's she beheld. The sight riveted her to the spot where she stood; she shuddered and dared not move a step forwards.

She looked round and saw a window open. The thought flashed upon her that she might avail herself of the circumstance. But he suffers so dreadfully! How frightfully he screams! The rope must be cut. Duna advanced a few steps. That horrid, gaping mouth! Duna tottered back, and mechanically, unconscious of what she did, she raised herself to the window-ledge, and dropped from it into the courtyard.

When she was in the court-yard, she knew not what she had done, or what she was to-do. She had escaped the sight of that ferocious Satanic mouth, but not the influence of her tormentor. He had fascinated her. He was still lord of her life. Her knees trembled, she dared not to withdraw from the window.

"Ha! devil's jade!" howled the miscreant, savagely, "you have done cleverly! I'd have slit your throat like a chicken's."

These words, uttered in unspeakable agony and despair, suddenly rallied the girl's energies. She ran to the gate, the monster's horrid jest had proved his horrid punishment. Could he have supposed that he tied the knot for himself? Could he have supposed that that awful moment, in which her foot hung over the grave, should be the moment of deliverance to the innocent, and of exemplary punishment to the guilty? Here was the finger of Providence. It is a falsehood that vice and crime alone prosper in this world.

She ran, and ran, until her strength was nigh exhausted: no one was in sight. She ran further; her breath failed; her limbs tottered; she dared not look round, lest she should again see that fearful mouth, lest she should again fall into the hands of her persecutor. Nowhere a living soul.

She struggled up a rising ground.

"Ah! there is our butler; and there is Vaska, and Prochor. Ah! *he* too is with them."

He, to wit, the incomparable Ivan, the governor's valet. They were all returning home from the brandy shop, careless and happy, singing love songs, cracking jokes upon their masters, with their caps set jauntily on one side, and tacking along the road in easy zig-zags. Duna ran towards them, pale, with staring eyes and flying hair; her neck uncovered—her wits bewildered.

"Come along! quick! quick!" she screamed. "He is hanging! hanging! hanging!—the villian is hanging!—faster! faster!"

"Hey, darling little dove of the woods!" they all cried to her, with a laugh; "who is hanging? Where is he hanging?—Give us a kiss, Dunushka. 'Tis a merry world."

"He is hanging, I tell you! Don't laugh. Run to the house. Take forks, hatchets, guns—a thief—a murderer, with great moustaches and a red nose! He said he would slit my throat like a chicken's—that he'd hang me!"

They hastened their steps, armed themselves as well as they could, broke the house door open, and went into the parlor. The robber had fainted; blood streamed from his mouth and nose; the arm by which he hung had grown nearly a foot longer. They took him down and bound him. After the return of the master and mistress of the house, he was conveyed the same evening to prison, and delivered into the hands of Justice! and Justice could not but own, with astonishment, that never till then had so long an arm come before her.

☞ Marshal Ney, of France, according to a statement in the *Savannah Republican*, was an officer in the Revolutionary army of the United States. His name was Michael Rudolf. He was, it is said, of German parentage, and was born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. At a very early age he entered the army, and achieved distinction in Lee's legion. He married in Liberty county, Georgia, but after he sailed for France, from Sunbury, he never returned to the United States.—The historians of France report his birth place to be Sarre Louis, on the confines of the Rhine.

ANNOYING.—Little dogs, little debts, and little men. Attend a concert, and you will find the only person who wishes to bring his boquets into early notice, will be a dapper little fellow who has to stand on a shingle to jump over a corn cob.

☞ If you don't wish to get angry, never argue with a blockhead. Remember, the duller the razor the more you cut yourself and swear.

GONE TO POT.—The whole of last year's lobsters, and a large portion of its hopes. Let us take a fresh start, as the boy said when he went back a mile and half to leap over a hog trough.

☞ An Ohio poet, in speaking of the road to Heaven, says it is an avenue of blue, paved with stars. What the side walks consist of, we shall probably be informed in the next sonnet. Mother of pearl perhaps, with alabaster awning posts.

☞ Genuine politeness is the first born offspring of generosity and modesty.