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TOWANDA:

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Selected Poetry.

[From the Atlantic Monthly, for February.]
THE PALM AND THE PINE.

BY HAYWARD TAYLOR.

When Peter led the first Crusade,
A Norseman wooed an Arab maid.
He loved her lithe and palmy grace,
And the dark beauty of her face.
She loved his cheeks, so ruddy fair,
His sunny eyes and yellow hair.
He called—she left her father's tent;
She followed whereso'er he went.
She left the palms in Palestine
To sit beneath the Norland pine.
She sang the musky Orient strains
Where Winter smelt the spowly plains.
Their natures met like night and morn,
What time the morning star is born.
The child that, from their meeting grew
Hung, like a star, between the two.
The glossy night his mother shed
From her long hair was on his head;
But in its shade they saw arise
The morning of his father's eyes.
Beneath the tawny Orient's stain
Wandered the Norseman's crimson vein;
Beneath the Northern force was seen
The Arab sense, alert and keen.
His were the Vikings' sneaky hands,
The arching foot of Eastern lands.
And in his soul conflicting strove
Northern indifference, Southern love;
The chastity of temperate blood,
Impetuous passion's fiery food;
The settled faith that nothing shakes,
The jealousy a breath awakes;
The planning Reason's sober gaze,
And Fancy's meteoric blaze.
And stronger, as he grew to man,
The contradicting natures ran.—
As mingled streams from Etna flow,
One born of fire, and one of snow,
And one impelled, and one withheld,
And one obeyed, and one rebelled.
One gave him force, the other fire;
This self-control, and that desire.
One filled his heart with fierce unrest;
With peace serene the other blessed.
He knew the depth and knew the height,
The bounds of darkness and of light;
And who these far extremes has seen,
Must needs know all that lies between.
So, with untaught, instinctive art,
He read the myriad-natured heart.
He met the men of many a land;
They gave their souls into his hand;
And none of them was long unknown:
The hardest lesson was his own.
But how he lived, and where and when,
It matters not to other men;
For, as a fountain disappears,
To gush again in latter years,
So nature lost again may rise
After a lapse of centuries.—
May track the hidden course of blood,
Through many a generation's flood,
Till, on some unsuspected field,
The latest lineage is revealed.
The hearts that met in Palestine,
And mingled near the Norland pine,
Still beat with double pulse in mine.

Selected Tale.

THE HANGING GUEST. A RUSSIAN STORY.

It is a grand discovery of our days, and one that has furnished the material for many a distinguished author's renown, that nothing in the world is more interesting, admirable, dignified, and edifying, than the life of a respectable robber. The jail is his only 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 conditions 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 way of tell-story. It is one that made a deep impression upon me, as an instance of the marvelous ways of Divine justice.

Two versts from—
One condition more. You must allow me to promise none of your virtuous sort. I tell my tale only for the amusement of my readers, perhaps, 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 Michailovitch P., a retired captain, and at present district justice, a very worthy man, as are all district justices in the W—a department.

Early one Sunday morning, in the month of August, —, his worship, Gaurila Michailovitch, with his honored lady, Parksova Yego-

rovan, set off for the city, in a britschka, to transact some business, viz: to go to church, to drink with his reverence and protopope, to eat and be convivial 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 at 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 cookmaid to the river to catch crayfish; Procher and Daria went nutting to 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 sprightly, virtuous damsel; by her calling a house-maid; by her natural good qualities, the favorite of her mistress, the grand object of her 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 Neeska Prospective—neglected the polishing of his master's boots, to the great scandal and indignation of the whole provincial administration; none but she 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 the 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 neckerchief in order, tightened her girdle, and hummed a tune, when suddenly there was a gentle tap at the door. "That is he!" and like an arrow she flew and opened the door and let him in. "Ah! it is 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 swartly face much in want of the barber's office, terribly foxy moustaches, and a dusky red nose, and a scarlet forehead, blue lips, and bloodthirsty eyes; the very type of the chairman of a city pot-house, or one of those diabolical figures that are only to be seen in Salvator Rosa's paintings. The astonished Duna recoiled some steps, and repeated with a sigh from the bottom of her heart: "It is not he!" Meanwhile the stranger had stepped in, and with the utmost coolness closed the door again, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

"What 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 am 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 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 'With 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 lock to be alone with so pretty a girl as you, my angel!" and once more he patted her on the cheek with his coarse, dirty hand. The angry Duna retreated into a corner.

"But who are you? It is very unhandsome, 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 a bore no 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 best milliner's shop in the Neeska Prospective; an unshaven, broad-shouldered, ugly vagabond, in a frieze cloak, with red moustaches and a violet nose, is a different sort of thing, and enough to frighten anybody. 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 am I?"

"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 on the foul waters of the morass. This is the approved style in robber's 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 one; 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 breakfast together, and then—"

With a sudden gesture he threw his arms 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 nearly touched her cheek, put her in a downright passion; and with the strength that makes heroes of great use in moments of extreme peril, she pushed the audacious fellow back.

"Hands off if you please, Mr. Robber! I would thank you 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 me 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 black 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, and put everything you have got on the table, and stir yourself."

Pals and bewildered, she tottered to the cupboard in the ante-chamber. He stuck the knife in his boot, and followed her step by step. Bread, brandy, salt, butter, cheese, and cold roast were placed on the same 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 voracity, and spitting 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; it's capital brandy. What's your name?"

"Catharina Nicola."

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

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

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

"There's 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 soft skin till it had 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 1,500 roubles 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 Yermeyevna, 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, while 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 from the governor left the town, and sped with hasty steps, and with a heart brim-full 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 flown by it; but in the brandy 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 in despair 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, and 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 around 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—your hospitality.—Gaurila Michailovitch keeps his money in his 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 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 that 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—O ho! 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 Yermeyevna. Can't you make up your mind? Hang the lock! Avdotya Yermeyevna, 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 burst open with a crash.

"Who! What a lot of fine things! Bank notes, and ducats, watches! They don't go spoiled most likely. A ring? I don't want it."

"Oh! I'll take these diamonds. Are these all crumbs of officer?"

Chatting in this fashion with himself and with Duna, he crammed his pockets with money and watches, 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! Ar'n'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 abide leaving eye-witness 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 Yermeyevna, 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, curled 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. "O 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 on 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 his clinging love for 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! Don't be afraid, Duna! You shall die in the pleasantest 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, submitting to all 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 round 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 in life.

"Presently, 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 we must 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 will 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 glided 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, hating the rope would snap; but in vain! he had but the knife in his boot, he might have severed it, or, at the worst, 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 it out?

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 arm creaked 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; the 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 last from his iron bosom.

Duna, petrified, and thinking only of death, had hitherto looked on in 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 woke her, however, from her trance. She saw him bleeding, as if it were half a dream; she saw blood on the floor, a hideous graping mouth, with great misshapen teeth, red fiery eyes starting from their sockets; 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 villain reached it with the toes of one foot; he raised himself up a few inches. 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 benumbed and powerless. The knot, too, had grown too tight; the reprobate felt 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!"

Farming as a Vocation.

The life of the farmer has ever been considered by himself, one of toil and drudgery, but with low much reason, it may be well to ask, to investigate, and to become satisfied. It is the lot of man in general to have an occupation. If not necessary for a living, it is made a means of obtaining wealth, fame, or power. A few, born to wealth or titles, pursue no calling but that of pleasure. Such lead miserable lives, and do little or no good in the world. It is appointed into all men to work. It is necessary to health, strength, comfort, and happiness. But to work, it is not necessary to guide the plow or harrow, to wield the axe or scythe, to sow or reap. There are other kinds of work, equally laborious and fatiguing—other occupations more wearing to the system, and attended with less pleasure. In this country, there are more men engaged in farming than in any other occupation, and in the rural districts, they constitute a large majority of the inhabitants, and, as a consequence, see and know little of the drudgery of other occupations. In their visits to the mechanic, or manufacturer, they see him sheltered from the storms and cold, then notice that his skin is less tawny, his hands softer and whiter, and his clothes perhaps less soiled and torn; and it is but natural that they should think his labor less hard than theirs. They see the merchant behind his counter smiling to his customers, or at his desk counting his money, and they cannot think *he works*; and they go away wishing that Providence had been as kind to them. They see the lawyer advocating the cause of his client, uttering with eloquence witty or grave sentences, bringing tears to the eyes, or laughter to the countenance, of judge, jury, and spectators; and they go away, rejoicing that the gifts of Providence are so partially bestowed. They see not the mechanic at work by his lamp, while farmers are reading by their fire-sides; they see him not with his accounts, anxiously looking forward to the time when his payments become due, or his flour barrel empty, or his pork barrel out; they see not the anxious and careworn countenance of the merchant, while alone in his office, just before his bank note becomes due, and no money to meet it; and they see not the lawyer in the still hours of the night, with aching head and weary eyes, looking up authorities to sustain his cause on the eve of trial.

It is they themselves—the farmers—that have set the stamp of drudgery upon their occupation. No one else admits or believes it. The lawyer, the doctor, the merchant, and the mechanic, envy the farmer his farm and his happiness—his bread, butter, and cheese—his fruits, meats, and his grains, the product of his own labor, that he can eat with an appetite sharpened by muscular exercise, and knowing that they are pure and healthy. Ask the mechanic what he is striving for, and what is his aim. For a home, a piece of land that he can cultivate, and eat the fruits of his own raising; the merchant will tell you that he hopes to end his days upon a farm; and the lawyer and doctor will tell you the same. What if their faces are blanched while the farmer is tawny—their fingers delicate and supple, while the farmer are dingy and clanny—their garments fine and clean, while his are soiled and coarse. Each is appropriate and equally respectable. A chimney-sweep in white linen, or a farmer at his plow in fine broadcloth, would be an object of ridicule, equally with the lawyer in rags. More men make themselves ridiculous by over-dressing than the reverse. If the farmer has not delicacy, he has strength, and power of endurance—far more valuable. If he is not educated and refined, it is no fault of his occupation, did he himself not think so; for no one has more leisure for reading and study.