

# THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

"I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man."—Thomas Jefferson.

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## MISCELLANEOUS.

### THE WIFE'S REVENGE.

A LEGEND OF GERMANY.

A small hamlet rested upon the side of one of the lofty mountains of the Julian Alps, which thence towering aloft, concealed from view its snow-crowded peak amid the encircling clouds of night.

Three persons still lingered around the scanty fire in the cheerless kitchen of the inn, though it was midnight. Silence had fallen upon them as they gazed on the decaying embers, which now blazed up, then sank again, sending forth no warmth, nor creating any sound indicative of their presence, save now and then a sharp crackling as the landlord stirred them up. They smoked their pipes with that meditative look peculiar to those who have just heard, as they had, a wild and fearful narrative.—The narrator, and the most remarkable of the three, was a stranger, only just arrived in the vicinity after some years of foreign travel. Want and hardship in other lands had given him the appearance of an older man than he really was, by usurping a few of the wrinkles of Time to trace them on his visage. The fierce rays of the tropic sun had bronzed his complexion, and constant familiarity with danger had bestowed upon him the reckless, undaunted air of a warrior not unused to scenes of blood and strife. Yet the soldier's manly frankness was wanting; for, in the quick, glancing eye and compressed lips, might be seen the workings of a mind capable of devising any thing subtle or villainous, allied to the resolution necessary for the execution of any of his schemes.

"Look ye, my good friend," putting aside the lamp which rested upon the table placed behind himself and the person he addressed, "did you deny your belief of what I said concerning the spirits who walk among our hills at night? Do you not believe in them?"

"Certainly not," replied he, with a sort of forced scornful smile, as if he would discover a mind of superior mould; yet that were foolish, since by the attempt at a sneer, he did but betray the superstitious weakness he strove to conceal.

None of the horrible tales of his native land seemed capable of receiving any credit in the stranger's mind, for in the quick glance of recognition which passed—unobserved by their companion—between the old host and himself, the cause of his conduct became evident, since some plot seemed hatching between them which could bring no good to the other—who was a miller—as he was the person imposed upon.

"I'll tell you what, my good friend," said the host, interrupting their continued discussion, "it's full time to part; so, my good Frans, canst take a hint?"

"Why, yes," said the miller, in an uncertain tone, as though he doubted whether to go or to remain; but rising, he walked to the window and looked out upon the sky, then with a cold shudder he closed the casement and returning to the hearth, sat down in silence.

"Well, miller, what's your mind?"

"I think I'll remain here to night."

"Couldn't think of it, miller."

"Well, Hands," said he, after a little while, "I suppose I must go, as you will not let me stay, but let me tell you, I shall not soon forget this, and hastily wishing the stranger 'a good night's rest,' he turned his steps homeward.

No sooner had the last echo of his footsteps died away, than the host, shaking the stranger cordially by the hand, exclaimed, "Right glad am I to see you again, my worthy Kleiner; a fine game you've played upon our friendly miller."

"Ay, truly, old friend; little does he think that he has spent the whole evening listening to the words of a rival, returned to claim the bride he strove so long to win."

"Ah, my good boy, strange thinks have happened since you left us, to seek a fortune in foreign lands."

"What? what? my lovely Maria has—"

"Married the miller."

"By all the spirits of the Hartz, and fiends of hell! I would have slain him while he stood before me, had I but known that he had dared to wed my promised bride!"

The demon of passion, with magic hand, changed the expression of his visage. Where previously reigned the calm, contented look of the traveller, returned to his native land to seek his affianced wife now predominated the thirst for vengeance. He rushed to the door as if to pursue the miller, but the host threw himself before him.

"Be calm, good Kleiner, I have a scheme which shall, by one blow, destroy the miller and his family. Listen do."

Gradually, as the fell plot discovered to the traveller a new way of revenge, his whole appearance changed, and when the host concluded, his external fierceness had disappeared; but the calm that pervaded his countenance showed the consuming fire that glowed within. Let us leave them, hastily preparing for the execution of their plot, and accompany the miller as he ascends the rugged path which leads to his mountain home.

There are those who will utter their disbelief of something they pretend to consider ridiculous, who when alone in some wild glen, or trackless forest, will ponder on the subject, in spite of their wish to think of something less fearful, till, from very fear, they own to themselves their belief in what they have heard, and thus hope to exercise the phantom which haunts their minds.—Such was the miller, and frightful were the images which filled his imagination as he pursued his mountain path. He became convinced of what he before denied, and from every rock and hillock, from every bush and tree, he expected some awful spirit to appear and overwhelm him in his wrath.

His nature was fierce and fiery; though in his cooler moments he had been staid and cowardly, and even justly so, yet when aroused by an imagined injury, he could, like many others in this world, perform feats on the impulse of the moment, which, when calm, he had not the heart even to attempt. He was quick and vindictive, and it was always as convenient for him to forget a favour, as it was natural for him to remember an injury. He was alive to suspicion and jealousy, and as his character was an exception to the national one, he was hated & despised by all save one sweet soul, who seemed to love him most who she saw him spurned. Who can account for woman's love? Who can describe that sweet flower, growing unnoticed upon a tender stalk, blooming the while for the most worthless object upon earth—a jealous husband, but she who owns the passion?

In her case, she loved not her husband merely because he had once been the very god of her affection, but because she saw in him the scape-goat, as it were, of his fellows, and she knew it needed all her love to make him happy. When passion had endowed him with more than his usual strength and courage, and he burst out with threats and imprecation against some neighbor, she, poor, ill-used creature, would cling to his neck, his arms, his knees, praying him to be calm, and detaining him, till reason had again assumed her empire. Sometimes incensed at her interference, he would with brutal violence dash her from him, and curse her for her—love! Yet, though the violent love he always professed for her before marriage, ceased with the ceremony, and did not even dwindle into the solid admiration and esteem it often does, he watched her with the vigilance that a boy would a new purchased dog, to see that none should dare be kind to him, lest some one should wrest his growing authority from him.

He neared his home; it was a truly grand and magnificent retreat, and yet, of course had been sought by him, merely on account of its utility; and therefore in gazing upon its use gratified his desire for gain, more than its sublimity fired his imagination.—The scene was wild but beautiful. Some hundred feet above where he stood, a mountain torrent dashed over a precipice, and on each side of the ravine through which it took its course, lay two immense rocks, hemming in and protecting the pretty stream below; a few stunted evergreens partially covered the steep rocks, finding but scanty room to take root in their cliffs.

For one moment the miller deliberated whether he should take the usual yet dangerous footpath up the rock, or follow the more circuitous horse-road which was much safer; he chose the latter which was not much used. He gained at length the rocky summit, and plainly saw the light

burning in his dwelling, but as he turned his head to look in another direction, the pulsations of his heart ceased, his hair stood on end, for he beheld a tall, stately figure, whose white dress seemed besmeared with human blood; in his right hand he held a scull, within which glowed a light; in his left a massive fleshbone.

Fear crept upon him as he gazed. A cold, death-like chill ran through his veins, and his shaking knees prevented his accomplishing the purpose of his heart. A sepulchral-toned voice thus with measured accents sounded in his ear:

"Stand and listen, man of clay; the fiery spirit of vengeance who rides upon the thundercloud, and direct, the forked lightning, bids ye listen and obey! The rival ye thought dead, will this night return; and the wife of your bosom will fly with him."

An unbroken pause ensued; at last, the miller raising his head, glanced at the spot where he had seen the misty spirit; it had vanished. For one moment he did not seem to realize what he had seen and heard; the next, as the assertion of his wife's infidelity occurred to him, he rushed toward the house; the door yielded to his might, but no wife greeted him; he seated himself, the sense of fear left him, but the determination of revenge had taken possession of his mind, for jealousy had stung him deeply; he believed his wife guilty, and then a thought struck him; with the fury of a maniac he knocked at his bed room door until it flew off the hinges. *She was not there!*

His worst suspicions seemed confirmed, and in his bosom reined that species of frenzy, the person affected with which, often says and does things of which he is unconscious. The noise he had made awoke his little babe, whose wail now met his ear.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he shrieked, "child of a guilty mother." He snatched the infant from its pillow, and for a moment gazed fixedly upon it; but not one spark of paternal fondness was in that gaze, for if any had ever existed, his passion smothered its influence. Unmindful of his screams, he shook the boy as he exclaimed, "Death were better for thee, boy, than life, embittered by the knowledge of a mother's crime." A lady he saw from the house; a little beyond the threshold he beheld his wife approaching him.

"Ah, husband," said she, sweetly, "I have waited very, very long for you, beneath the rocks."

"Woman, it is false! You have been to see your paramour. Away!"

She saw her child, who cried as he heard his mother's voice, and discovering upon her husband's countenance, as she approached him, the fiendish remarks of rage, she attempted to snatch her child, fearing for its safety. He pushed her from him.

"Husband—Frans, what would you do? Give me my child." But with one arm he held aloft his weeping boy, and with the other, clasped his wife.

"Come on—on with me, base woman! Upon yonder precipice's edge, you shall gaze upon his destruction! It will be so sweet to see thy sorrow!"

"My child! my child! Give me my child! Oh, Frans! by all you hold sacred, I pray you give me back my boy!"

She prayed, she screamed, she clung to his knees to deter him from his evident intention. In vain! Who, with one spark of humanity glowing in his frame, or who, with even the outward attributes of man, could have resisted that fair being's prayers for the safety of her child? Who could have disbelieved her protestations of innocence?

He gained the precipice's slippery edge, dragging after him his shrieking wife, who clung to him with more than woman's strength, striving to detain him.

"Spare him, Frans! spare our sweet child!"

But, unmoved as the firm rock he stood upon, he threw his left hand upon her shoulder and pressed her to the ground.

"Now, base adulteress, behold the death of your babe," he said, and at arm's length held aloft the unconscious boy. It was where the cataract dashed down into the foaming abyss, he cast his only child! A wild laugh burst from his lips. *His revenge was complete!*

Then, for the first time, reason threw one bright gleam to illumine his tumultuous bosom. He gazed upon the fair being who lay insensible at his feet—yet no pity evinced itself for her; he seemed indeed conscious of his act, for seeing her revive a little he exclaimed, "Go now and seek your paramour; your husband follows his child! then giving one high leap into the air, fell deep into the wild, watery cataract.

Poor ill-used wife! innocent, yet believed guilty, what was then your state?—Morning dawned and beheld the widowed wife, the childless mother, gazing vacantly into the grave of her husband and son.—But two others, the former rival of the miller, and the villainous host, were there.

"Behold, woman," exclaimed the former, "I am he, who in the guise of the spirit of Vengeance, fed thy husband's ear with stories of thy infidelity. I, once his rival, now the enemy of thee, base woman!"

He had approached so near to her as he spoke, that she leant her head as if to whisper to him; he bent low; with one bound she placed him between herself and the fatal brink, and, quick as lightning, pushed him toward it with all her force—for in one moment, although the morning had found her a raving maniac, she saw the cause of her husband's conduct. In vain he endeavored to regain his balance. He slipped; and then rolled over into the yawning chasm, to meet in death the victims of his wrath.

The country-people still point out the fatal spot to the traveller, and strange tales are told of a woman's spirit that still flies about the Miller's Cliff—and even now, though fifty years have passed since the occurrence of the events mentioned in this narrative, none dare venture near the rock of the Wife's revenge!

From the U. S. Magazine and Democratic Review.  
OLD IRONSIDES ON A LEE SHORE.  
BY AN EYE WITNESS.

It was at the close of a stormy day in the year 1835, when the gallant frigate Constitution, under the command of Captain Elliot—having on board the late Edward Livingston, late Minister at the Court of France, and his family, and manned by nearly five hundred souls—drew near to the "chops" of the English Channel. For four days she had been beating down from Plymouth, and on the fifth, at evening, she made her last tack for the French coast.

The watch was set at eight P. M.—the captain came on deck soon after, and having ascertained the bearing of Scilly, gave orders to keep the ship "full and by," remarking at the same time to the officer of the deck, that he might make the light on the lee beam, but he stated, he thought it more than probable that he would pass it without seeing it. He then "turned in," as did most of the idlers and the starboard watch.

At a quarter past nine, P. M., the ship headed west by compass, when the call of "Light O!" was heard from the foretop-sail yard.

"Where away?" asked the officer of the deck.

"Three points on the lee bow," replied the look-out man, which the unprofessional reader will readily understand to mean very nearly straight ahead. At this moment, the captain appeared and took the trumpet.

"Call all hands," was his immediate order.

"All hands," whistled the boatswain, with the long shrill summons familiar to the ears of all who have ever been on board a man-of-war.

"All hands," screamed the boatswain's mates, and ere the last echo died away, all but the sick were upon deck.

The ship was staggering through a heavy swell from the Bay of Biscay, the gale which had been blowing several days, had increased to a severity that was not to be made light of. The breakers, where Sir Cloudesley Shovel and his fleet were destroyed, in the days of Queen Anne, sang their songs of death before, and the Dead-Man's Ledge replied in hoarse notes behind us. To go ahead seemed to be death, and to attempt to go about was sure destruction.

The first thing that caught the eye of the captain was the furled mainsail, which he had ordered to be carried throughout the evening—the hauling up of which, contrary to the order that he had given on leaving the deck, had caused the ship to fall off to leeward two points, and had thus led her into a position on a "lee shore" upon which a strong gale was blowing her, in which the chance of safety appeared to the stoutest nerves almost hopeless. That sole chance consisted in standing on, to carry us through the breakers of Scilly or by a close graze along their outer ledge. Was this destined to be the end of the gallant old ship, consecrated by so many a prayer and blessing from the heart of a nation?

"Why is the mainsail up, when I ordered it set?" cried the captain in a tremendous voice.

"Finding that she pitched her bows under, I took it in under your general order sir that the officer of the deck should carry sail according to his discretion," replied the Lieutenant in command.

"Heave the log," was the prompt command, to the mazier's mate. The log was thrown.

"How fast does she go?"

"Five knots and a half, sir."

"Board the main tack, sir."

"She will not bear it," said the officer of the deck.

"Board the main tack," thundered the Captain.—"Keep her full and by, Quartermaster."

"Aye! aye, sir!" The tack was boarded. "Haul aft the main sheet," shouted the captain, and aft it went like the spreading of a sea bird's wing, giving the huge sail to the gale.

"Give her the lee helm when she goes into the sea," cried the Captain.

"Aye! aye! sir! she has it," growled out the old sea-dog at the binnacle.

"Right your helm; keep her full and by."

"Aye! aye! sir! full and by she is," was the prompt answer from the helm.

"How fast does she go?"

"Eight knot and a half, sir."

"How bears the light?"

"Nearly a beam sir."

"Keep her away half a point."

"How fast does she go?"

"Nine knots sir."

"Steady so!" returned the Captain.

"Steady answered the helmsman, and all was the silence of the grave upon that crowded deck—except the howling of the storm—for a space of time that seemed to my imagination almost an age.

It was a trying hour with us—unless we could carry sail so as to go at the rate of nine knots an hour, we must of necessity dash upon Scilly, and who ever touched these rocks and lived during a storm? The sea ran very high, the rain fell in sheets, the sky was one black curtain illumined only by the faint light which was to mark our deliverance, or stand a monument of our destruction. The wind had got above whistling, it came in puffs that flattened the waves, and made our old frigate settle to her bearings, while every thing on board seemed cracking into pieces. At this moment the carpenter reported at the left bolt of the weather fore-shroud had drawn.

"Get on the luffs, and set them on all the weather shrouds. Keep her at small helm, quarter master, and ease her in the sea," were the orders of the Captain.

The luffs were soon put upon the weather shrouds, which of course relieved the chains and channels, but many an anxious eye was turned towards the remaining bolts, for upon them depended the masts, and upon the masts depended the safety of the ship—for with one foot of canvass less she could not live fifteen minutes.

Onward plunged the overladen frigate, and at every surge she seemed bent upon making the deep the sailor's grave, and her live oak sides, his coffin of glory. She had been fitted out at Boston when the thermometer was below zero. Her shroud of course therefore slackened at every strain, and her unwieldy masts (for she had those designed for the frigate Cumberland, a much larger ship) seemed ready to jump out of her. And now, while all was apprehension, another bolt drew!—and then another!—until at last, our whole stay was placed upon a single bolt less than a man's wrist in circumference. Still the good iron clung to the solid wood, and bore us alongside the breakers, though in a most fearful proximity to them. This thrilling incident has never, I believe, been noticed in public, but it is the literal fact—which I make not the slightest attempt to embellish.

As we galloped on—for I can compare our vessel's leaping to nothing else—the rocks seemed very near us! Dark as was the night, the white foam scowled around their black heads, while the spray fell over us, and the thunder of the dashing surge sounded like the awful knell that the ocean was singing for the victims it was eager to engulf.

At length the light bore upon our quarter, and the broad Atlantic rolled its white caps before us.—During this time all were silent, each officer and man was at his post, and the bearing and countenance of the captain seemed to give encouragement to every person on board. With but a bare possibility of saving the ship and those on board he placed his reliance upon his nautical skill and courage, and by carrying the mainsail when in any other situation it would have been considered a suicidal act, he weathered the lee shore, & saved the Constitution.

The mainsail was now hauled up, by light hearts and strong hands, the jib and spanker taken in, and from the light of Scilly the gallant vessel, under close reefed topsail and main trysails, took her departure and danced merrily over the deep towards the United States.

"Pipe down," said the captain to the first lieutenant, "and splice the main brace." "Pipe down," echoed the first lieutenant to the boatswain. "Pipe down," whistled the boatswain to the crew, and "pipe down" it was.

Soon the "Jack of the Dust" held his levee on the main gun-deck, and the weather-beaten tars, as they gathered about the grog tub, and luxuriated upon a full allow-