

# THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

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 MILLERS MAID.

There is a lonely mill close beside the little hamlet of Udorf, near the Rhine shore, between the villages of Hersel and Ursel, on the left bank below Bonn. This mill is said to have been the scene of the following story:

It was on a Sunday morning, 'ages long ago,' that the miller of this mill, and his whole family, went forth to hear the holy mass at the nearest church, in the village of Hersel. The mill, which was also his residence, was left in charge of a servant-girl named Hannechen, or Jenny, a stout-hearted lass, who had long lived with him in that capacity. An infant child, of an age unfit for church, was left in her charge likewise.

The girl was busily employed in preparing dinner for the return of her master and his family, when who should enter all of a sudden but an old sweetheart of hers, named Heinrich Bötteler. He was an idle, graceless fellow, whom the miller had for bidden his house, but whom Jenny, with the amiable perversity peculiar to her sex, only liked, perhaps, all the better because others gave him no countenance. She was glad to see him, and she told him so too; and although in the midst of her work, she not only got him something to eat at once, but also found time to sit down with him and have a gossip, while he despatched the food she set before him. As he ate, however he let fall his knife.

'Pick that up, my lass,' said he in a joking way, to the good-natured girl.

'Nay, Heinrich,' she replied, 'your back should be more supple than mine, for you have less work to make it stiff. I labor all day long, and you do nothing. But, never mind! 'twould go hard with me an I refused to do more than that for you, bad though you be.'

This was spoken half sportively, and half in good earnest; for, kind-hearted as the girl was, and much as she liked the scapegrace, she was too honest and industrious herself to encourage and approve of idleness; and a suspicious course of life in any one else, however dear to her. She stooped down accordingly, to pick up the knife. As she was in the act of rising, however, the treacherous villain drew a dagger from under his coat, and caught her by the nape of the neck, gripping her throat firmly with his fingers to prevent her screaming the while.

'Now lass,' he said, swearing out a bad oath at the same time, 'where is your master's money? I'll have that or your life; so take your choice.'

The terrified girl would fain have parleyed with the ruffian, but he would hear nothing she could say.

'Master's money or you life, lass!' was all the answer he vouchsafed to her entreaties and adjurations. 'Choose at once,' was the only alternative he offered her; 'the grave or the gold!'

She saw that there was no hope of mercy at his hands; and, as she saw it, her native resolution awoke in her bosom. Like the generality of her gentle sex, she was timid at trifles; a scratch was a subject of

fear to her; a draw of blood caused her to faint; an unwonted sound filled her soul with fear in the night. But when her energies were aroused by any adequate cause, she proved, as her sex have ever done, that in courage, in endurance, in presence of mind, and in resources of emergency, she far surpassed the bravest and coolest men.

'Well, well, Heinrich!' she said, resignedly, 'what is to be, must be. But if you take the money, I shall even go along with ye. This will be no home for me any more. But ease your gripe of my neck a little—don't squeeze so hard; I can't move, you hug me so tight; and if I can't stir you cannot get the money—that's clear, you know. Besides time presses; and if it be done at all, it must be done quickly, as the family will shortly be back from Hersel.'

The ruffian relaxed his gripe, and finally let go his hold. Her reasons were all cogent with his cupidity.

'Come,' she said;—'quick, quick!—no delay: the money is in the master's bedroom.'

She tripped up stairs, gaily as a lark; he followed closely at her heels. She led the way into her master's bedroom, and pointed out the coffer in which his money was secured.

'Here,' she said, reaching him an axe which lay in a corner of the room, 'this will wrench it open at once: and while you are tying it up, I shall just step up stairs to my own apartment, and get a few things ready for our flight, as well as my own little savings for the last five years.'

The ruffian was thrown off his guard by her openness and apparent anxiety to accompany him. Like all egotists, he deceived himself, when self-deceit was most certain to be his destruction.

'Go, lass,' was all he said; 'but not long. This job will be done in a twinkling.'

She disappeared at the words. He immediately broke open the chest, and was soon engaged in rummaging its contents.

As he was thus employed, however, absorbed in the contemplation of his prey, and eagerly occupied in securing it on his person, the brave-hearted girl stole down the stairs on tiptoe. Creeping softly along the passages, she speedily gained the door of the chamber unseen by him, and likewise unheard. It was but the work of a moment for her to turn the key in the wards and lock him in. This done, she rushed forth to the outer door of the mill, and gave the alarm.

'Fly, fly!' she shrieked to the child, her master's little boy, an infant five years old, the only being within sight or sound of her. 'Fly, fly to thy father! Tell him we shall all be murdered an he haste not back. Fly, fly!'

The child, who was at play before the door, at once obeyed the energetic command of the brave girl, and sped as fast as his tiny legs could carry him on the road by which he knew his parents would return from church. Hannechen cheered him onward, and inspirited his little heart as he ran.

'Bless thee, boy—bless thee! she exclaimed, in the gladness of her heart; 'an master arrives in time, I will offer up a taper on the altar of our blessed lady of Krenzburg, by Bonn.'

She sat down on the stone bench by the mill door to ease her over excited spirit; and she wept, as she sat, at the thought of her happy deliverance.

'Thank God!' she ejaculated, 'thank God for this escape. Oh, the deadly villain!—and I so fond of him, too!'

A shrill whistle, from the grated window of the chamber in which she had shut up the ruffian Heinrich, caught her ear, and made her start at once to her feet.

'Diether! Diether!' she heard him shout, 'catch the child, and come hither! I am fast. Come hither! Bring the boy here, and kill the girl!'

She glanced hastily up at the casement from which the imprisoned villain's hand beckoned to some one in the distance, and then looked anxiously after her infant emis-

sary. The little messenger held on his way unharmed, however; and she thought to herself that the alarm was a false one, raised to excite her fear, and overcome her resolution. Just, however, as the child reached a hollow spot in the next field—the channel of a natural drain, then dry with the heats of summer—she saw another ruffian start up from the bed of the drain, and catching him in his arms, hasten towards the mill, in accordance with the directions of his accomplice. In a moment she perceived her danger, and in a moment more she formed her future plan of proceeding. Retreating into the mill, she double-locked and bolted the door—the only apparent entrance to the edifice, every other means of obvious access to the interior being barred by means of strong iron-gratings fixed against all the windows; and then took her post at an upper casement determined to await patiently either her masters return, and her consequent delivery from that dangerous position, or her own death, if it were inevitable.

'Never,' said she to herself, 'never shall I leave my master's house a prey to such villains, or permit his property to be carried off before my eyes by them, while I have life and strength to defend it.'

She had barely time to secure herself within, when the ruffian from without, holding the hapless child in one hand, and a long sharp knife in the other, assailed the door with kicks, and curses and imprecations of the most dreadful character.

'Confound thee,' he cried, applying the foulest epithets of which the free-speaking Teutonic languages are so copious; 'open the door, or I'll break it in on ye.'

'If you can you may,' was all the noble girl replied; 'God is my witness, and in him I put my trust.'

'Cut the brat's throat! roared the imprisoned ruffian above; 'that will bring her reason.'

Stout-hearted as poor Hannechen was, she quailed at this cruel suggestion. For a moment her resolution wavered; but it was only for a moment. She saw that her own death was certain if she admitted the assailant, and she knew that her master would be robbed. She had no reason to hope that even the life of the infant would be spared by her compliance. It was to risk all against nothing. Like a discreet girl, she consequently held fast in her resolve to abide as she was while life remained, or until assistance should reach her.

'An ye open not the door,' shouted the villain from without, accompanying his words with the vilest abuses and the fiercest imprecations, 'I'll hack this whelp's limbs to pieces with my knife, and then burn the mill over your head. 'Twill be a merry blaze, I throw.'

'I put my trust in God,' replied the dauntless girl; 'never shall ye set your foot within these walls whilst I have life to prevent you.'

The ruffian laid the infant for a moment on the sward as he sought for combustibles wherewith to execute his latter threat. In this search he espied, perhaps the only possible clandestine entrance to the building. It was a large aperture in the wall communicating with the great wheel and the other machinery of the mill and was a point entirely unprotected, for the reason that the simple occupants had never supposed it feasible for any one to seek admission through such a dangerous inlet. Elated with his discovery, the ruffian returned to the infant, and, tying the hands and feet of the child, threw it on the ground even as a butcher will fling a lamb destined for the slaughter, to await his time for slaying. He then stole back to the aperture, by which he hoped to effect an entrance. All this was unseen by the dauntless girl within.

In the meanwhile her mind was busied with a thousand cogitations. She clearly perceived that no means would be left untried to effect an entrance, and she knew that on the exclusion of her foe depended her own existence. A thought struck her.

'It is Sunday,' said she to herself; 'the mill never works on the Sabbath, suppose I set the mill a-going now? It can be seen far off, and haply my master, or some of his neighbors, wondering at the sight, may haste hither to know the cause. A lucky thought,' she exclaimed; 'tis God sent it to me!'

No sooner said than done. Being all her life accustomed to mill-gear, it was but the work of a moment for her to set the machinery in motion. A brisk breeze which sprang up, as it were by the special interposition of Providence, at once, set the sails flying. The arms of the huge engine whirled round with fearful rapidity; the great wheel slowly revolved on its axle; the smaller gear turned and creaked, and groaned, according as they came into action the mill was in full operation.

It was at that very instant that the ruffian Diether had succeeded in squeezing himself through the aperture in the wall, and getting safely lodged in the interior of the great drum-wheel. His dismay, however, was describable when he began to be whirled about with its rotation, and found that all his efforts to put a stop to the powerful machinery which set it in motion, or to extricate himself from his perilous situation, were fruitless. His cries were most appalling; his shrieks were truly fearful; his curses and imprecations were horrible to hear. Hannechen hastened to the spot, and saw him caught, like a reptile as he was in his own trap. It need not be added, that she did not liberate him. She knew that he would be more frightened than hurt, if he kept within his rotary prison; and she knew, also, that unless he attempted to escape, there was no danger of his falling out

insinuate all the while. In the meantime the wheel went round & round & went the ruffian along with it, steadily and unceasingly too. In vain did he promise the stout-hearted girl to work her no harm; in vain did he implore her to pity on his helpless condition; in vain did he pray to all the powers of heaven, and adjure all the powers of hell to his aid. She would not hear nor heed him; and, unheard and unheeded of them likewise, muttering curses, he was whirled round and round in the unerring wheel, until, at last, feeling and perception failed him, and he saw and heard no more. He fell senseless on the bottom of the engine, but even then his inanimate body continued to be whirled round, and round, and round, as before; the brave girl not daring to trust to appearances in connexion with such a villain, and being therefore, afraid to suspend the machinery, or stop the mill-gear and tackle from running at their fullest speed.

A loud knocking at the door was shortly after heard, and she hastened thither. It was her master and his family, accompanied by several of their neighbors. The unaccustomed appearance of the mill-sails in full swing on the Sunday, had, as she anticipated, attracted their attention, and they had hastened home from church for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of the phenomenon. The father bore his little boy in his arms; he had cut the cords wherewith the child was tied, but he was unable to obtain an account of the extraordinary circumstances that had occurred from the affrighted innocent.

Hannechen, in a few words, told all; and then the spirit which had sustained her so long and so well while the emergency lasted, forsook her at once as it passed away. She fell senseless into the arms of the miller's eldest son, and was with difficulty recovered.

The machinery of the mill was at once stopped, and the inanimate ruffian dragged forth from the great wheel. The other ruffian was brought down from his prison. Each were then bound and sent off to Bonn under a strong escort; and, in due course came under the hands of the town executioner.

It was not long till Hannechen became a bride. The bridegroom was the miller's

son, who had loved her long and well, but with a passion previously unrequited. They lived thenceforth happily together for many years, and died at a good old age, surrounded by a flourishing family. To the latest hour of her life, this brave-hearted woman would shudder as she told the tale of her danger, and her deliverance.

## A TALE OF GRENADA.

BY WASHINGTON IRVIN.

There was once a poor mason or brick-layer in Grenada, who kept all the saints days and holy days, and St. Monday in the bargain, and yet he grew poorer, and could scarcely earn bread for his numerous family. One night he was roused from his first sleep by a knock at the door. He opened it, and beheld before him a tall meagre cadaverous looking priest.

'Hark ye, honest friend,' said the stranger, 'I have often observed that you are a good Christian, and one to be trusted; will you undertake a job this very night?'

'With all my heart, Senor Padre, on condition that I am paid accordingly.'

'That you shall be, but you must suffer yourself to be blindfolded.'

To this the mason made no objection; so being hoodwinked, he was led by the priest through various rough lanes and winding passages, until he stopped before the portals of a house. The priest then applied a key turning a creaking lock, and opening what seemed to be a ponderous door. They quickly entered, the door was closed and bolted; and the mason was conducted through an echoing corridor and spacious hall, into the interior part of the building. Here the bandage was removed from his eyes, and he found himself in a vault.

In the center was the dry basin of an old Moorish fountain, under which the priest requested him to form a small vault, bricks and mortar being at hand, for that purpose. He accordingly worked all night, but without finishing the vault. Just before day break, the priest put a piece of gold into his hand, and having again blindfolded him conducted him back to his dwelling.

'Are you willing to return and complete your work?'

'Gladly, Senor Padre, provided I am well paid.'

'Well, then, to-morrow at midnight I will call again.'

'Now,' said the priest, 'you must help me to bring forth the bodies that are to be buried in this vault.'

At these words, he followed the priest with trembling steps into a retired chamber of the mansion, expecting to behold some ghastly spectacle of death, but was relieved on seeing three or four portly jars standing in one corner. They were evidently full of money, and it was with great difficulty that he and the priest carried them to the tomb. The vault was then closed, the pavement replaced, and all traces of the work obliterated.

The mason was again hoodwinked and led forth by a route different from that by which he had come. After they had wandered for a long time through a perplexed maze of lanes and alleys, they halted. The priest then put two pieces of gold into his hand. 'Wait here,' said he, 'until you hear the cathedral bell toll for matins. If you presume to uncover your eyes before that time, evil will befall you.' So saying he departed.

The mason waited faithfully, amusing himself by weighing the gold pieces in his hand and clinking them against each other. The moment the bell rung its matins peal, he uncovered his eyes, and found himself on the banks of the Penil, from whence he made the best of his way home and revelled with his family for a whole fortnight on the profits of his night's work, after which he was as poor as ever. He continued to work a good deal, to keep saints days and holy days from year to year; while his family grew up as gaint as a crew of gipsies.

As he was seated one morning at the door of his hovel, he was accosted by a